

# The FORUM

## Gazette

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Chaman Lal:  
Against "remote control"

The statement of the Governor, Mr S.S. Ray, that no Sarbat Khalsa will be allowed in the Golden Temple on Diwali day as announced by Bhai Jasbir Singh Rode, a close relation of the late Sant Jarnail Singh Bhinderanwale, has a hollow ring about it. If the Governor's administration is determined to fight terrorism to the end and keep the shrine free from crime and violence, why allow Mr. Rode and other armed followers to enter the Golden Temple against the advice of the man on the spot, Mr Chaman Lal, Inspector General of Police (Border), who has applied for long leave in "disgust and protest".

It seems the government refuses to learn from past experience

or it is deliberately following a policy which is alienating people from it and confirming the suspicion that it is providing covert support to militants. When Mr Rode and other three priests were sacked by the Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee after Operation Black Thunder, the Deputy Commissioner of Amritsar, almost coerced the SGPC to retain Mr Rode as Akal Takht chief. The SGPC had accused Mr Rode of creating the mess in the Golden Temple and also held him responsible for its desecration by anti-social elements. But the government instead of handing back the control of the temple to officials of the SGPC, an elected body of the Sikhs, allowed Mr Rode to address a press conference in jail to explain his position and claim that he was still the Akal Takht

chief as he was chosen by a Sarbat Khalsa and that only another Sarbat Khalsa could remove him. It was obvious then that the government wanted him to continue as Akal Takht chief even though the government had once accused him of being a secessionist and arrested him at Manila with the help of Interpol. It appears that the government still wants to help him otherwise, there is no reason why he should be allowed to enter the holy shrine with men who brandished swords and pushed their way through the security cordon without being frisked. Once inside the temple they shouted pro-Bhinderanwale slogans and threatened to behead the SGPC officials. Mr Rode made his stand quite clear. He said that only a Sarbat Khalsa could decide whether the Sikhs wanted "pooran

azadi" or autonomy. The government's backing to him is not understandable when even the militant outfits, the Panthic Committee and the Dardami Taksal, are divided over support to him. The SGPC officials have already alleged that Mr. Rode acted on behalf of the government and Mr Harkishen Singh Surjeet, CPM leader, has accused the government of spreading the Bhinderanwale cult.

Observers here say that broadly speaking there are two reasons for the government's covert help to Mr Rode and his ilk. Firstly, election of the executive of the SGPC is due next month and it does not want the Akali group owing allegiance to Mr Prakash Singh Badal and Mr Tohra to win. Last year the election of the executive was predated in the month of October to

suit a certain group but it did not fructify. The SGPC general house got divided into two groups Barnala group and the Badal-Tohra group. Two elections were held and two sets of office-bearers were elected each claiming that majority of the members with it. The Badal-Tohra group had an edge over the other group. Now under the Gurdwara Act of 1925, it is the government which has to notify the result of the election but the government refrained from doing so. It referred the matter to legal experts who have till date not disclosed their advice. If the majority of the members had been with Mr Surjit Singh Barnala, the government would surely have notified the result. The law and convention says that till the government announces the result, the old incumbents continue in office

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## Chaman Lal Going On 'Protest Leave'

# Battle Against Terrorism By State Terrorism

By K.S. Khosla

By Baiju

The question 'Who is the Opposition leader capable of becoming Prime Minister of India in place of Rajiv Gandhi?' has been confidently answered in the last fortnight as the launching of Janata Dal ended an era of open discord in the national level Opposition unity efforts. The formation of Janata Dal at Bangalore by the

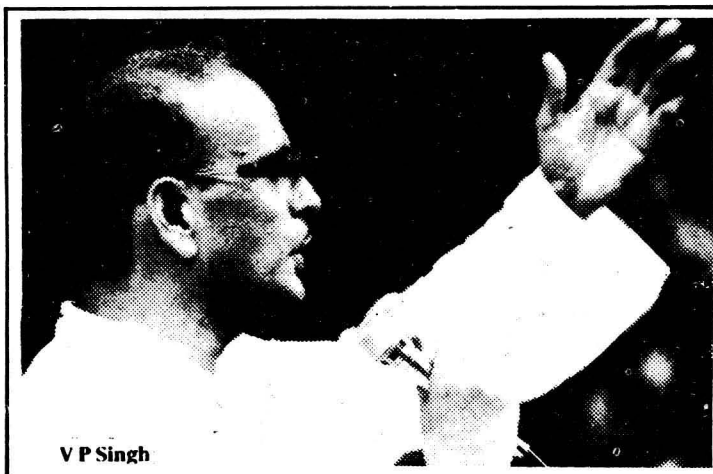
three centrist Opposition parties—Janata Party, Lok Dal, Jan Morcha—can take over Delhi as it can offer a programmatic, non-Left and non-BJP opposition to the Congress (I). But the latest question is how formidable their challenge is to ground the Congress which has ruled the nation for 38 years in its 40 years of independence.

### Programmes And Policies

In the 4000 word policies and programmes document the Janata Dal promises a 'new era of a democratic socialist order rooted in the values of the freedom struggle under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi and to get rid of those socio-economic settings which force the nation into a situation of relative deprivation in the context of the power dynamics'. It offers an alternative vision to deal with the people's problems. It has even coined a new term "communitarian democracy of the dreams of Gandhiji" and to reach this goal it wants the nation to move from the colonial heritage of

## Birth Of Janata Dal

# End Of An Era Of Discord?



V P Singh

being state-centric to community-oriented state system. The new party's programmes also plan to launch a literacy army in villages and towns to remove illiteracy.

On economic policy the new party would like a shift from the urban and industrial orientation to rural and agricultural development. In this context it promised to

implement the Raj Krishna Committee recommendations to speed up land redistribution. As regards industrial policy, the 1956 policy as modified by the Janata Government in 1977 would be continued. It would fight the exploitation of the multinationals and give primacy to the principle of Swadeshi in industrial development. And for effective restructuring of the economy it favoured democratic decentralisation right down to the panchayat level. Amidst other offerings the document also promises electoral reforms, lowering of voting age to 18 and autonomy to the All India Radio and Doordarshan.

### BJP And Janata Dal

The loose framework of the National Front which is willing to cooperate with regional parties and leftist parties will help the Janata Dal in showing the way to Delhi. In its recent national-level meeting at Ahmedabad the BJP has reiterated its stance as a pro-Hindu party and made it clear that it wanted the Minorities Commission to be scrapped and Arti-

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## Letters

### Price Of Being Minority

A small group of innocent, unarmed and peace-loving people belonging to a Christian denomination were conducting a prayer meeting in a hired house at Faridabad (House No 2548, Sector 7) on 1 October 1988 at 7 p.m. These people adhered to non-violence and strictly refrain from alcohol, smoking, cinemas and all sorts of unsocial and unlawful activities. They started the meeting at 7 p.m. with a song in Malayalam. No musical instruments were used, the participants were just clapping their hands and singing. As soon as the song started someone came and told them not to make loud noise and they stopped clapping their hands and continued singing.

After a few minutes a large group of people arrived at the house with big lathis, iron bars, etc. and started beating these unarmed and helpless people without any provocation from their side. They started beating and kicking these believers. These people did not even utter a word in protest but endured these brutal assaults patiently for the sake of what they believe and practice. By hearing the commotion a number of on-lookers arrived at the scene, but none of them tried to dissuade these cruel persons. After beating everyone to their hearts' content they left the scene unhurriedly as if after a game of football leaving their lathis and iron bars behind and after a while a few persons came in by a van and loaded the items coolly and went away as if it was a legitimate affair.

All this took place in the presence of hundreds of people and the only reason I could find for this preconceived silence on the part of the spectators is that they belong to a minority community. If this is the fate of the people of

minority communities, what is the meaning in preaching secularism? Don't they have the right to worship the God in their own way, that, too, without creating any inconvenience to the others?

Faridabad K.V. Varghese

### Bidar Riots, A Matter Of Concern For Everyone

The latest communal riot in Bidar as vividly reported by you is an eye-opener to all concerned. It has presented a critical analysis of the anatomy of the attempts to annihilate the Sikh community.

Despite our tall claims and slogans of secularism, the country is witnessing the growth of communalism. The oft-repeated attack on the minorities, whether the various Hindu minorities or the Muslim minority or the Sikh minority is a sad commentary on the handful anti-social elements who go unpunished for their crimes against the society.

I am not holding any brief for the minorities. But I have a duty to raise my voice and appeal to all concerned with humanism also to raise their voices and contemplate measures to demolish this monster called communalism. It is also not always true to say the minorities are always on the defence. Some of them do play mischief. But it is the minority group that suffers most, both in terms of human life and property.

The Sikh students and community were singled out for the brutal attack. Bidar has been a fortress of communal harmony. But even this fort of Hasan Gangu has today shown symptoms of its weakness. It is always easy to blame a particular political party or a social organisation for whatever happens. Have the Governments tried to identify any single party or group solely responsible for the sufferings of the minorities? What sins had the Sikh students of Bidar committed to face the wrath of the hooligans?

I am not ignoring the fact that the Hindu minority is also facing such a situation in Punjab. Should we punish the Sikhs of Bidar in retaliation?

There is an allegation regarding the behaviour of the police. Every political party and every social group blames the police for what-

ever happens. The police is blamed for "inaction" or "overaction." We should remember that when police initiate action, after exhausting the available alternatives, it cannot maintain a balance and a judicious mind.

This does not absolve the police of all responsibility. The available evidences do establish a case against the local police for their utter failure to gauge the situation and take preemptive action.

The riots of Bidar call for serious thinking and action to prevent further such occurrences elsewhere. It is high time that an analysis of the role of police in communal disturbances be made. There should be adequate representation of the minorities, besides SC/ST and backward classes in the police force. Errant police officers should be punished.

Will the Government furnish the relevant particulars of the riots that have taken place during the last 15 years and state how many guilty persons were actually punished? I am afraid no Government would dare do this as the number of persons who were punished is extremely low.

The guilty should be severely punished. The public should be made to take up the challenge. Let us forget for convenience the religious leaders who are more a liability than an asset.

Bangalore Mumtaz Ali Khan

In the letter to the Editor titled 'The Religious Institutions Bill, 1988' (THE FORUM GAZETTE, Oct. 5-19) the writer's name should read: Mahindar Singh.

Readers are requested to send in their letters typed or neatly handwritten and addressed to the Editor, The Forum Gazette, 3 Masjid Road, Jangpura, New Delhi 110 014.

## Sound And Fury

The Government wants to make it clear that this order (banning Salman Rushdie's novel, *The Satanic Verses* does not detract or otherwise reflect on the artistic or literary worth of the book or its author.

—Official notification.

India has succumbed to people who now seem to be powerful enough to move things by the wave of the finger.

—Salman Rushdie.

Obviously, many more people in India will now read and want to read the book because it is banned.

—Mr Martyn Goff, Administrator of the Booker Prize.

I have not read the book (*Satanic Verses*) and do not intend to. Why should I read filth?

—Syed Shahabuddin.

Vishwanath Pratap Singh is not a National Front man. He is a Congressman period.

—Jay Dubashi in *Organiser*.

My dream is coming true.

—Mr Devi Lal.

The more these "non-left" Opposition parties try to come together, the more divided they ought to be.

—A.M. in the *Economic and Political Weekly*.

It is Pepsi socialism he (Mr Rajiv Gandhi) is talking about and Pepsi self-reliance.

—V.P. Singh.

I shall do whatever the party asks me to do.

—Pranab Mukherjee.

I have more faith in Mr Gandhi than his own party men.

—Laldenga.

For Third World rulers political survival quite often depends on politicisation of natural disasters.

—Frontier.

If anything happened to Rajiv Gandhi, Khalistanies and Muslims are going to attack us (Hindus).

—Bal Thackeray.

It was wrong on the part of the Central leaders to judge the loyalty of Sikhs to the nation on the basis of their loyalty to the Congress(I).

—Darshan Singh Ragi.

I am a philosopher not a politician.

—Subash Ghising in *The Illustrated Weekly of India*.

There are no pleasures involved in politics; it is simply a duty to be performed.

—Jayalalitha.

These days we have a lot of Ministers whose life style changes after assuming office.

—Jatin Chakravorty.

You can take our emotions, because of long links, for granted, but you can't take Indian politics or the Indian army for granted.

—J.N. Dixit, Indian High Commissioner in Colombo.

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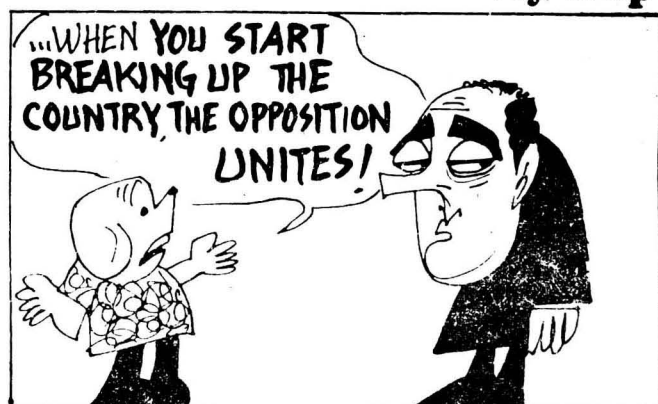
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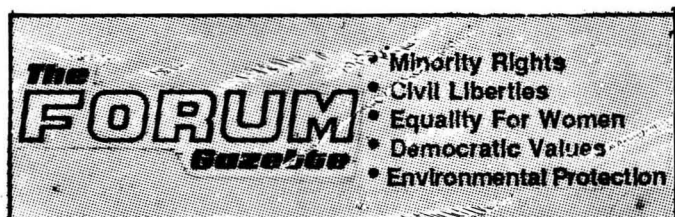
## NEWSHOUND



## By Rap







## Unpremeditated But Deadly

Nothing could have demolished the whole edifice of what is called the Centre's Punjab policy more effectively than the unpremeditated remarks made by Chaman Lal, the IG Police (Border Range) based at Amritsar. The occasion was his difference with the powers that be. But what he had to say is so deadly in its impact that to miss the significance of what he said would amount to either hypocrisy or self-delusion.

Three things stand out in what he said. One, decisions are not made by the men on the spot but by those above and presumably from Delhi. Secondly, there is some kind of an unconfessed bias in favour of Jathedar Rode. Thirdly, despite denials to the contrary, indiscriminate repression is the policy that is sought to be followed. Each one of these impromptu truths undermine the falsehoods, cold-blooded and deliberate, which have been put out day after day.

Everyone knows that decisions are made in Delhi. And those in Chandigarh and on the spot have no option except to carry them out. This is what was happening between October 1982 and June 1984 after Darbara Singh Government was dismissed and the Centre imposed the President's rule.

Even when Darbara Singh was in power, he had hardly any discretion. It is widely known, for instance, that he wanted to go into the Golden Temple after the murder of the DIG Police at the entrance of the Temple but he was not allowed to do so. Whether he was overruled by the then Home Minister or the Prime Minister is a matter of detail.

Throughout that period Delhi would direct and the Administration would carry out those orders. If there is anyone who knows how the Akali agitation was deliberately prolonged, through one subterfuge and another it is B.D. Pande who was then the Governor of the State. But within a few years of their joining service officers get so conditioned that they simply obey orders and never protest. Chaman Lal appears to have been an exception and is bound to pay the price for it.

That people in Delhi have a soft corner for Jathedar Rode has been known for a long time. If he did not spend more than one night in the Golden Temple and withdrew after that it is believed that this too was under orders from Delhi. On his own he might have stayed put till Diwali. But Chaman Lal had spilled the beans and so there was a change of strategy.

However, the most damaging statement made by Chaman Lal is that he was told to carry out repression after the train massacre near Taran Taran but he refused to do so. He refused because of his conviction which is widely shared by those outside the Government that the average citizen does not support terrorism though sometimes he is intimidated into doing so. He, therefore, drew a distinction between voluntary collaboration with militants and involuntary help extended to them. But evidently his bosses did not share his perception. They could not overrule him because he was the man on the spot but they could overrule him in more crucial decisions like whether Jathedar Rode was to be allowed entry into the Golden Temple or not.

When he was overruled, he felt outraged. That is what made him speak out so candidly. Nothing that is being done now can wash away the lethal effect of what he has said. The Centre stands condemned through the mouth of one of its own officials. He was asked to implement a policy which was both against his judgement and his conscience. In an unprecedented move he has sought transfer from that post. The request for transfer will be conceded for to keep such a man at Amritsar any longer would just not do. It remains to be seen, however, what price he would pay for it.

B.I. Pande and Chaman Lal represent two opposite poles. One man given with what is imposed upon him regardless of the fact whatever he believes in what he is doing. The other man speaks out for he cannot live with the falsehoods he is required to live with day after day.

*The more corrupt the state, the more laws.*

— Tacitus

# The Two Jaito Visits

What a study in contrast—Mr Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Jaito in Punjab on September 21 last and that of his grandfather, Mr Jawaharlal Nehru on the same day 65 years ago? How circumstances change with the passage of time and with it attitudes and policies?

By K.S. Khosla

Mr Nehru came in a country cart to Jaito on September 21, 1923 along with two of his Congress colleagues, Mr K Santanum and Mr A.T. Gidwani, to see for himself the Akali morcha against the British and to express sympathy and solidarity with the Akalis. The Akalis were undergoing a revivalist movement to purge their gurdwaras of corrupt mahants (priests) who were receiving covert help from the British administration. Many incidents took place, the famous being *Guru Ka Bagh* morcha in which Akal volunteers allowed themselves to be beaten brutally by the police without wincing or turning back from their mission. Highly impressed by the non-violent character of the morcha, the Congress at one time appointed a liaison officer at Amritsar to keep in close touch with the Akali movement which started the cooperation between the Congress and the Akalis for the country's freedom struggle. A year earlier when the British were forced to hand over the keys of the Golden Temple to the Akalis, Mahatma Gandhi sent a telegram to Baba Kharak Singh saying: "First decisive battle for India's freedom won. Congratulations."

### The Jaito Morcha

The young Maharaja of Nabha State was forced to abdicate by the British for his patriotic leanings and a British Administrator was appointed to rule the State. The Akalis agitated against the deposition both in Nabha and outside. In the course of the agitation, a religious ceremony at Jaito in Nabha State was interrupted by the British. Thus began the Jaito morcha. To protest against the impiety, the Akalis started sending volunteers in batches of 25 daily on foot from the Akal Takht in Amritsar to Jaito, about 190 kilometers away. Before they reached Jaito, these jathas were mercilessly beaten, arrested and taken to far off places in a jungle or a desert and abandoned there without food and water. A special session of the Congress held in Delhi in the autumn of 1923 passed a resolution expressing sympathy with the victims of Jaito morcha and promised assistance to sufferers. Mr Nehru, who had been reading accounts of these atrocities, wanted to see for himself what happened there. On arrival at Jaito, Mr Nehru, Mr Santanum and Mr Gidwani were arrested on a charge of entering the State without permission, though they had

come only as spectators. They were chained and paraded through the streets of Jaito. The scene is best described in Mr Nehru's own words in his autobiography. "Santanum and I were handcuffed together, his left wrist to my right one, and a chain attached to the handcuff was held by the policeman leading us. Gidwani, also handcuffed and chained, brought up the rear. This march of ours down the streets of Jaito town reminded me forcibly of a dog being led on a chain. We felt somewhat irritated to begin with. But the humour of the situation dawned upon us, and, on the whole, we enjoyed the experience." They were kept in a small and damp cell in Nabha jail for more than two weeks and then convicted and sentenced to two years imprisonment. But the same evening the sentences were suspended and they were taken to the nearest railway station, and let off there. They took a train for Ambala from where they came to Delhi. This was not the end of their agony. All three of them suffered from typhoid, contracted from Nabha jail; Mr Nehru was bed-ridden for four weeks but the other two suffered for longer periods.

About two years later the British finally gave in and allowed the last jatha to reach Jaito. The Sikh Gurdwara Act was passed on July 25, 1925 and the Gurdwara Board was designated as Shromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee.

### Changed Circumstances

How circumstances change with the passage of time and with it the people's attitude and beliefs. The same Akali party is in confrontation with the Congress and one of the issues is the same—management of gurdwaras and who should control the management.

Mr Rajiv Gandhi's visit to Jaito was not marked with the same fervour as that of his grandfather, though he did honour three freedom fighters of the Jaito morcha fame. During his half hour speech, Mr Gandhi did not refer directly to the Akalis but he emphasised the need for tackling terrorism with a stern hand and separating religion from politics. He made no mention of the Jaito morcha or the sacrifices made by the Akalis during the gurdwara reform movement. He also preferred to keep quiet about the sacrifice made by Mr Nehru at Jaito.

Probably Mr Gandhi could not do so because of the changed circumstances and the bitter relations between the Congress and the Akalis. Mr Nehru's visit created excitement and his arrest sent shock waves throughout Punjab. On the other hand, Mr Gandhi's

visit did not arouse even curiosity. On the contrary, it generated fear for which the administration is to be partly blamed. In this connection reports published in three leading English newspapers in the country are quite an eye-opener. *The Hindu* (September 22) says: "The streets of Jaito and the adjoining township of Bajakhana were deserted as if the entire area was under curfew. Residents said that the police had forced shops to close in the area. Many residents who did not want to go to the rally were being shoos into their houses by policemen."

The *"Indian Express"* (September 24) says: "Visitors to the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi's Jaito public meeting said that fire arms of all police and para military CRPF jawans including top ranking officers were withdrawn. Only the Black Cat commandos accompanying the Prime Minister were armed with sophisticated weapons. Sources said that CRPF jawans deployed in 300 yards of the rostrum were all carrying lathis."

But the best account of the atmosphere in the town is given by the *"Statesman"*. It says: "Sixtyfive years ago Jawaharlal Nehru walked the streets of this historic town leading a group of spirited people in the fight against the British rule. Today, his grandson, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, on his first visit to Punjab in almost four years, drove into a ghost town. The streets had been emptied of people, houses locked from inside and security men lining the procession route.....Apparently, even the constabulary of CRPF was not to be trusted and they were provided only with lathis.....Expectations did not run high among the people in the village. A people besieged by security men, shopkeepers who could not open their shops and housewives who had uniformed men posted outside their doors. The windows remained shut."

It is surprising how other newspapers failed to report this atmosphere of fear and suspicion in the town. That the extremist have created terror among the countryside is known to everyone. But Mr Gandhi got a first hand knowledge of the terror created by the police. One need not dwell on police excesses here but suffice to say what Mr Gandhi himself said in his speech. He said that on his way to Jaito he saw some people running away from his motorcade. He halted and called them back. During his speech he said that he had not heard nice things about the police and called upon them to win the cooperation and confidence of the people without which the fight against terrorism could not be fought effectively. How to win the confidence and friendship of the people—there is the rub. Mr Nehru was loved by the people, his grandson is feared.

■



## Chaman Lal

Continued from page 1

and similarly the SGPC continues to exercise its powers and duties. Obviously the government does not accept that position otherwise the support to Mr Rode to dislodge the SGPC from the temple is not understandable.

Observers say that the problem can be solved very easily by the government by holding elections to the SGPC as demanded by Akali Dals and various Sikh organisations and some other opposition political parties. Again, elections to the SGPC are to be held by the Central government. Under the Gurdwara Act, these elections are to be held every five years. The last elections were held in 1979 which were held after 14 years. The elections were due in 1984 but the government did not conduct them on the plea that the law and order situation was not good. In that case how were elections to the State Assembly held in 1985 when the law and order

rorism as such a course would create monsters. The shooting down of two senior police officers in Patiala recently by an inspector, Mr Dalbir Singh, who shot himself in the end, more than proves his point.

Reports coming from Amritsar say that Mr Chaman Lal had stopped fake encounters in his area. He was against harassment of innocent persons, though he favoured strong action against terrorists. Mr Chaman Lal disclosed that his bosses did not like his style of functioning and hence he was leaving in "disgust". Only a fortnight before his decision to leave the Punjab police, Mr Chaman Lal had told newsman in Amritsar that the public was not with the terrorists but it was not with the police also as it had no confidence in it (police). He wanted the police to refurbish its image. He had said that a corrupt and inefficient officer had no place in the police force.

**Mr Chaman Lal said that a corrupt and inefficient officer had no place in the police force. Efficiency should be judged not by the number of killings but by the number of people a police officer was able to win over to his side.**

situation was no better, if not worse. The SGPC officials allege that the government wants its "own men" to manage the affairs of the gurdwaras and say that they will never allow government interference in the religious affairs of the Sikhs. In sum, the government is continuing to follow its policy of destroying the traditional Akali leadership.

The second reason revolves round the strategy to deal with terrorism which the bold and courageous Inspector General of Police, Mr Chaman Lal, has brought to the fore for public debate, even though he has broken the service rules by going to the Press while in uniform. Should terrorism be curbed with repression or by a human approach? Mr Chaman Lal has alleged that the Director General of police, Mr K.P.S. Gill, already under criticism for having patted the bottom of a woman, I.A.S. officer, had wanted him to let loose repression after the train shooting near Taran Taran on September 7 last. He was against doing so as he thought it would be counter-productive. Mr Chaman Lal wanted to distinguish between an "active" supporter of terrorists and a "passive" supporter. He also wanted the police to change its attitude towards the public and befriend them in order to win their confidence and cooperation without which the battle against terrorism could not be won. He was also against the raising of "private armies" by the police to fight ter-

Efficiency should be judged not by the number of killings but by the number of people a police officer was able to win over to his side.

Another point raised by Mr Chaman Lal is whether the fight against terrorism in Punjab should be controlled from Delhi or by the man on the spot. He said he was not given any freedom to deal with the situation arising out of Mr Rode's decision to march towards the Golden Temple. He was in favour of arresting Mr Rode as he believed that his entry into the temple would nullify the gains of Operation Black Thunder. But order came "from above" not to arrest Mr Rode and allow him to enter the temple. He was against "remote control".

All are agreed that Mr Chaman Lal has said what needed to be said, though he should not have broken the service rules. But he must have been under great tension to erupt like he did. He is willing to pay the price for it. "It is too small a price to pay for being loyal to the Constitution, the people and the jawans," he says.

At least there has been one good result of Mr Chaman Lal's bold action. The Governor has announced that no Sarbat Khalsa would be allowed to be held inside the Golden Temple under any circumstance. But Mr Rode threatened while leaving the temple, the same evening, that he would return to hold the Sarbat Khalsa. Let us see who wins—Mr Rode or Mr Chaman Lal.

## Janata Dal

Continued from page 1

cle 370 to be abolished. It is, therefore, unrealistic to hope that the centrist formation can have electoral adjustments with the BJP and when one considers its policy pronouncements, it is clear that the BJP will have nothing basically different from the Congress(I) on questions of planning, while on questions of foreign policy, its approach will be basically opposed to nonalignment and anti-imperialism. It is a fact that the BJP has a lot of difference with the Congress(I), but how different the Janata Dal from these groups is difficult to find. Barring the two communist parties no other group has a different package of policies and programmes.

### Power Struggle

The one month's time given to the JD's constituents shows that internal dissensions within them is not that much simple. The much talked about Rama Krishna Hegde-Ajit Singh discord and Devi Lal-Bahuguna enmity would carry every chance to cripple the new formulation.

While H.N. Bahuguna, Ram Dhan and K.P. Unnikrishnan missed the *gaddi*, there has already started a contest within the *gaddi* to pilot it. Though V.P. Singh has been designated as the de jure driver, others like Devi Lal and Chandra Shekar are trying to be the defacto drivers. R.K. Hegde has himself been designated co-driver. Devi Lal's resignation drama has helped expose his desire to turn the wheel from behind. It is high time the opposition parties realised the need of the hour. Unless this is acknowledged, the launching of the Janata Dal will have no impact on the national political arena. The new party has nothing to highlight as did in its previous avatar in 1977

### V.P. Singh's Leadership

However, Mr V.P. Singh's position in the new party is all important as he is the only trump in its hands. But while the Dal is boasting of Mr Singh as its leader, by becoming so he has unknowingly lost his identity. His thoughts can easily be manipulated by the other stewards of the party as Jan

Morcha has no infrastructure to support him from behind. Mr Singh has to struggle hard to get things under his control without a revolt.

### Importance Of Congress(S)

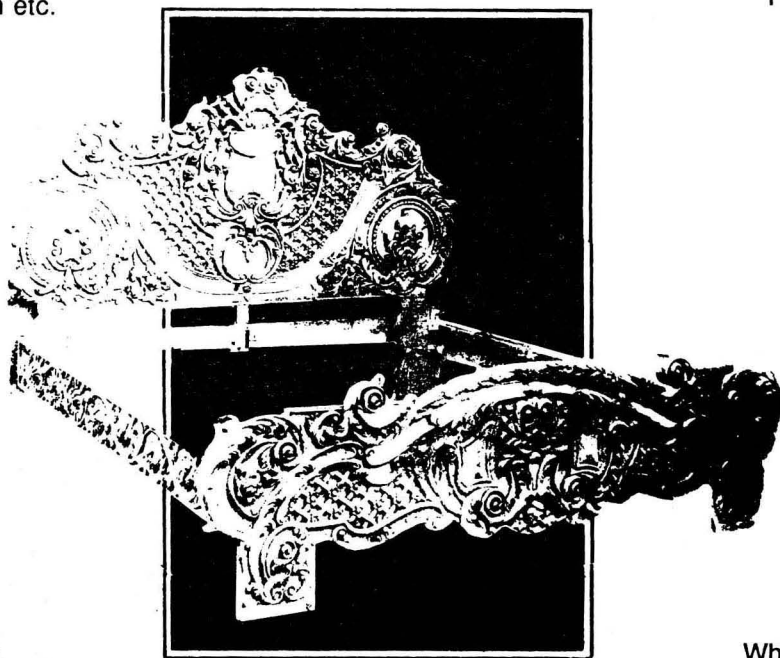
The absence of Mr H.N. Bahuguna, Ram Dhan and K.P. Unnikrishnan have already raised warning alarms, though their absence or even participation will not affect the Dal's progress. But still it has unveiled some soring points as how the new Janata Dal is a 'new dal.' Mr Unnikrishnan's observation is unquestionable. The haste, the adoption of the Janata Party's characters, constitution and policies and even the name will undermine the new party's credibility. The name itself is weak: it will not appeal the electorate of the south of the Vindhyas.

Mr Unnikrishnan's departure from the scene will cut off the new party's possible link with the non-Hindi populace. Hegde's influence is limited, there is seldom chance for it to go out of Karnataka. He is nowhere in the other southern states. His charisma and statesmanship can have national appeal but will not help getting votes from the people. Therefore, the only possible link is a friendly National Front.

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# Will The Call Of Conscience Prevail?

By Randhir Chhatwal

Inspector General of Police (Border Range) Punjab, Mr Chaman Lal's sudden and bold public announcement of his going on 'Protest leave' and requesting for transfer out of Punjab comes as a consequence of his inability to reconcile to fight the battle against terrorism by state terrorism. He was against this unethical, totally unlawful, ruthless and inhuman manner of planning and execution of the strategy which was proving counter productive. Though the trigger action to revolt vigorously, probably to shake the seat of power, now was provided by the blatant encouragement given by the Centre/State Governments to Jatendar Rode to enter Golden Temple. Mr Chaman Lal clearly informed as to when he made up his mind to leave Punjab Police "I was taken aback when soon after the killing of eight train passengers near Taran Taran last month, Mr Gill ordered me to let loose repression. I was dumb founded". But he refrained from resigning immediately as Prime Ministers' visit was imminent. The real issue brought out by him is "whether the Government still believes in following "bullet for bullet" policy advocated vociferously by combination of Ray and Rebeiro. Whether police should raise "Private armies" in the name of "to fight terrorism". Mr Chaman Lal was against such private armies as they create monsters which are difficult to harness later and pose new problems, apart from undermining the confidence of general public in the police. The killing of Mr Shital Dass, SSP, Patiala, proved this, when he was shot by the man he had himself recruited as "one man army" to eliminate hardcore terrorists. The Tribune (12 Oct.). Engineering of fake encounters to eliminate persons not liked by Police is notorious that even Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, during his 9 hour visit to Punjab after 41 months, referred to complaints against police excesses.

## Great Service To The Country

Mr Chaman Lal's action to awaken the countrymen to inform that what is going on in Punjab is not what is being told on T.V. and Radio or what is being given out by the media, was well taken by The Indian Post (12 Oct.). "Mr Chaman Lal I.G. of Police

(BR) Punjab, has done a great service to the country by making public his reasons. He has confirmed what Sikhs by and large have been saying about conditions in Punjab as well as the Centre's strategy there. They have largely been disbelieved as being too prejudiced, but few will doubt the senior police officer, that too one awarded the Padma Shri." Reasoning more alienation amongst the Sikhs who begin to feel that no one cares whether they are wrong. The Indian Post "Backwards in Punjab" (12 Oct.) "The continuing violence in Punjab (all of it deliberately projected by the authorities as terrorist violence) the prolonged propaganda on Doordarshan, has defused all protest even by civil rights body against the repression on innocent by the State". The Hindustan Times under "Principled Stand" (12 Oct.) could not refrain from complimenting him. "He (Chaman Lal) should be complimented for doing so". But The Tribune (12 Oct.) sees his action differently. "When policemen turn Showmen they acquire the halo of a hero". Indian Express under 'Risky venture' (12 Oct.) expresses differently to The Tribune. "Chaman Lal, an officer, was known for his preference for a low profile and disinclination for dramatic action". But The Tribune is confused or is trying to confuse the reader by writing "Situating as he was, Mr Chaman Lal should not have said all that he had said. But what he said needed saying". How?

The Times of India wrote two full column editorial under 'Black Blunder' (12 Oct.) "IG (Border) has given vent to the feelings many officers and administrators in Punjab who are fed up with constant interference from Delhi." The Telegraph under "Untimely Controversy" (13 Oct.) regrets that "administration has lost the services of an upright and efficient police officer". The Statesman under "The Rhode card again" (15 Oct.) is unable to see the real cause behind the public outburst of Mr Chaman Lal. "Time has come to put an end to Political experiments that far from helping to restore peace in Punjab only add to the turmoil".

## Service Rules

Media in general is unable to swallow the dose given by Mr Chaman Lal. Having recently tasted victory in the withdrawal of

Defamation Bill, it probably felt slighted in its complete failure to project the real happenings in Punjab or by miserably under playing. The events "My very consciousness does not allow me to harass the public who are basically peace loving", says Chaman Lal. But the State and Centre Government with full support of the media, TV, Radio, by projecting slanted picture of the happening in Punjab, has forced black laws one after the other and even the imposition of the Emergency measures by the 59th Amendment only restricted to Punjab, is largely accepted and approved by the people in the country outside Punjab. The Times of India demands that "Mr Chaman Lal should have discarded his uniform before going public." The Statesman says "grave violation of Service rules", The Tribune shares the views "He is certainly not right in giving public expression to his views in the manner in which he has done". Indian Express desires that "Serious note must, therefore, be taken of Mr Chaman Lal's action. We will be seeing as to whether the bold stand against tyranny is approved or he is pushed into a gutter."

## Why Punjab Problem Persists?

Except for the daily statistics of killings, our countrymen have been willingly kept ignorant of what is happening in Punjab. How the innocent population, particularly Sikh youth, both in villages and cities are facing police tyranny? How their aspirations for peace and prosperity in Punjab are being crushed? How they are being depicted as secessionists? The mind of the countrymen is kept prejudiced and is continuously polluted by feeding regular poisonous doses of anti-Sikh pills like (Indian Post 3 Oct reported) "A local Bidar Politician-Mr Belluri of having spread among the locals the canard that Sikhs would demand a Khalistan in Bidar, if their control over education continues". The contribution of fourth Estate in the same direction has been significant particularly after 1984. Now, we are in a stage that a chunk of our countrymen are ever eager to strengthen their cherished prejudice against Sikhs. Their interest seems confined to denigrating them and they bring out blatant lies and create ugly encounters under cover of fighting terrorism, anti-national and secessionist-which explains to a significant extent why terrorism refuses to die out there, why Sikhs continue being alienated from the Government, why Punjab problem appears difficult to solve.

It calls for a bold action on the part of the Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi to dismiss all those associated with Punjab policy since 1984 and have a new team from Home Minister down to IG Police, who have humane approach so as to evoke more co-operation, respect and faith from the public.

# Jain-Banerjee Panel Suggestion Rejected

By Manoj Mitta

The Lt-governor, Mr Romesh Bhandari, last fortnight turned down a recommendation by the Jain-Banerjee committee to appeal against the blanket acquittal in a case of multiple killings related to the November '84 riots.

This was the first time that the quasi-judicial committee, inquiring into individual riot cases, exercised its power to recommend an appeal. In turning down the recommendation, the government has been forced to lay bare its reluctance to punish those who had killed Sikhs in the wake of Mrs Indira Gandhi's assassination.

The case is about the killing of five Sikhs by a mob at Zakhira in West Delhi. Mr R.L. Gupta, then additional sessions judge, acquitted all the accused this May on the ground of lack of evidence. However, as the Jain-Banerjee committee pointed out in its recommendation, the judge acquitted the accused without even touching the main charge of their having killed five Sikhs.

## Five Acquired

The government, despite its admission that the death toll in the Delhi riots was as high as

2,733, has not so far secured a single conviction for murder. Though several of the accused have been acquitted the government has not appealed against a single judgement.

Ironically, barely a week after the government turned down the recommendation, the Prime Minister, Mr Rajiv Gandhi, claimed that riot culprits were going scot-free only because of inadequacies in the legal system.

Addressing a Delhi seminar on communalism on October 6, Mr Gandhi said: "We have to see equally that adequate punishment, quick punishment is handed out to all those who are involved in riots and communal disturbances. Unfortunately, the processes are so slow that by the time anything happens it is much too late to have any effect on those that suffer under the consequences. We must change the system to see that punishment is awarded quickly."

In the case (State vs Mahesh and others) decided by Mr Gupta, the Jain-Banerjee committee has pointed out that the judgement ignored several vital details of the prosecution story. Normally, a judge spells out the entire prose-

Continued on page 11

## Memorandum To the President

The Confederation of South Delhi Sikh Sabha Gurdwaras in a memorandum submitted to the President of India has drawn his attention towards the tremendous resentment being generated among Sikhs as a result of Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, 1988.

Expressing the sincere concern with the government's efforts to curb and prevent terrorism and condemning violent activities in the strongest terms the memorandum points that State terrorism is not the answer or strategy to bring about peace.

According to convener of the Confederation Lt. Gen. Manohar Singh (Retd.), the ostensible objective of the Bill to prevent the misuse of religious places is only skin deep. The real aim is to separate religion from politics. The Bill strikes at the very foundation of Sikh religion. The Memorandum also points that the said Bill is likely to be observed more in its breach rather than in compliance. The terms 'political activity', 'manager', 'harbouring', etc. as contained in the Bill have very wide and deep connotations.

The Memorandum points out that the present government does not seem to have learnt any lesson from the past experience. In order to liquidate a few persons, it thoughtlessly resorted to Operation Blue Star and injured the hearts of the entire Sikh community. Similarly, the government is repeating its mistake of alienating the Sikh community in order to keep a handful of terrorists out of the shrines.

The Memorandum urges upon the President to advise the government to take proper measures to eradicate the evil of terrorism rather than attacking the basic principles of Sikhism by passing Bills like the Religious Institutions (Prevention of Misuse) Bill, 1988.



# Reflections On Gandhiji's Birthday

By Bhagwant Singh Dalawari



"Let Hundreds Like Me Perish But Truth Prevail"

I write this tribute in regret and shame. I never write anything in advance or him for publication on 2nd October. I cannot bring myself up to writing such a piece because I know the degradation and degeneration that we have brought about in our lives. This degradation does not let me bring even the name of Gandhiji on my lips.

Godse murdered Gandhi once on 30th January, 1948. We murder him every day but more particularly on his birthday. AIR news at 6 a.m. which I listen to

immediately after prayers announced that "a grateful nation is paying homage today" to the Father of the Nation. My immediate thought was that this announcement should have read: "The Nation is going to play tricks with Gandhiji's memory again today". Why I say this is that today's India and its rulers are diametrically opposed to what Gandhiji said and did. Gandhiji—the one that I know—used to hold a prominent place in my bedroom on the wall where I could see directly in front when I got up and at night when I began to sleep.

This was in Paris when I used to work there and it was in Paris that Gandhiji played an important role in my life after Guru Granth Sahib. The Gandhi on the wall was not his picture but this quotation from his autobiography:

*Let Hundreds Like me Perish  
But Let Truth Prevail*

And those who pay lip-service to Gandhi and undertake functions, prayers, schemes and other services to reap political advantage have nothing to do with what the Father of the Nation held high in his words and deeds. In contrast to the above quotation, those who exploit his name believe as follows:

*Let Hundreds of Truths Perish But  
Let my Kursi prevail*

Lest one should think that I talk only of national political leaders. No, I talk of the Sikh leadership as well. Nay, I talk of a vast majority of our so-called leaders in different fields not excluding civil services, journalism, law and judiciary, even religion and fake spirituality.

Partitioned by a huge almirah, my Paris bedroom had Guru Granth Sahib on the other side and many quotations on the walls around my bed, such as "Ram Kasauti So Sahe Jo Marjiva Hoe" by Kabir, "Eh Janam Tumare Lekhe" by Ravidas, and "Satgur Ke Haun Sad Bal Jaya Pargat Marag Jin Kar Dikhlaya" by Guru Arjan. In my home when, sometimes, Catholics used to come and pray with me, they were astonished to know that I was not a Catholic because in my meetings with them at the Little Brothers Association for the Poor where we used to assemble for service to the old and infirm in their houses, my thoughts gave them the impression that I was a Christian. This gave me hope and reassurance to realise that Rama, Krishna, Mohammed, Nanak or Christ were the equal representatives of Truth as God had sent them. And in my eyes, Gandhiji was the finest example of living that truth in my lifetime.

When I think of my country today—the country in which Gandhi was born—I hang my head in shame. We lost him on 30th January 1948. He died physically but he lives in greater glory. Indeed he lives but we are dead and out of our dead corpses we try to take advantage of his perfume and show ourselves, in vain, in better light. Alas! Truth has the habit of not being concealed and our slip is always showing.

I never met Gandhiji. He died when I was 17, but I met him in Paris in his *Experiments With Truth* after I had been blessed by Guru Granth Sahib in digging out the Truth through personal experiences. I remain a sinner but the



grace of my Guru led me to digest analytically what Gandhiji tried to say in that book. It was the following sentence—some such wording—that brought me to the work of leprosy relief for training in Vellore and for settlement in Tapovan.

*"To see God face to face one has  
to love the  
meanest creation as oneself"*

I had been dumbfounded to realise that I could never consider anyone the meanest, but the long sleepless night brought before the leprosy patient, who, though not the meanest in human terms, had been considered the meanest by society.

And I recollect that the heading of one of the chapters was in Hindi (probably untranslatable in its romantic meaning) and that was *Nirbal Ke Bal Ram* (which, in my own understanding would be The strength of the weak is the Lord Himself). He had said something like this:

I went to meet a friend who was staying as a paying guest and the landlady was very friendly. My friend introduced me to her and her young daughter. As we were discussing things, an atmosphere was of frolic and it appears that I had an indecent joke thrown at the young girl. And my friend immediately admonished: "Oh, you too!" I ran away, left not only that home but also that town and felt relieved that I had been saved—*Nirbal Ke Bal Ram*.

When I think of the innumerable martyrs that we Sikhs have, I also think of Gandhi in utter devotion. As I woke up this morning at 3.30 a.m., before my bath and prakash of Guru Granth Sahib, the thought came to me that it was Gandhiji's birthday. "Let hundreds like me perish but let truth prevail" began ringing into my ears. Then I thought of sharing my personal knowledge of the falsehood still being paraded among the Sikhs. It has been said that Gandhiji had called Guru Gobind Singh "a misguided patriot." I had heard it too, but it would always irk my mind.

How could such a great man say something of such a low content? And lo, God made it possible for me to learn about its denial by Gandhiji himself. When I came to Maharashtra for the service of leprosy patients, I went to Nagpur for a while from Amravati. There I met Sardar Amir Singh of Frontier Electricals in Sadar Bazar. Although he is now no more his family still lives in Nagpur. Sardar Amir Singh told me in 1979 about Gandhiji's visit to the Frontier when Sardarji lived in Bannu. Having been aggrieved about the reported remark of Gandhiji, Sardar Amir Singh wrote a letter asking him whether he had said so. Gandhiji, he told me, sent him a telegram at once saying no, he had not said this and he did not think so. Later Gandhiji confirmed it in a letter. I did not see the letter but I had no reason to doubt Sardar Amir Singh. In any case he had no political interest in projecting Gandhi.

But I repeat my regret and shame at witnessing the utter hypocrisy that is being paraded in his name and the lies that have become our national pastime. Kuldip Nayyar had once given the heading of one of his articles as *Asatyamev Jayate*. When I think of Gandhiji today as the Seeker of Truth, as he was, because according to him, he had strayed into politics, I also think of those who borrow his name to perpetuate falsehood labelled Truth.

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## The Evidence On Kehar Singh

# Is This Enough To Hang A Man?

**H**opefully, time will reveal the truth about the Syed Modi murder case. What is beyond dispute is that the CBI discarded norms during its conduct of the investigation by leaking out bits of information against Dr. Sanjay Singh in a brazen effort to tarnish his reputation in the press much before charges had been levelled against him. There is little surprise, therefore, that wide sections of public opinion view the investigation as part of the Government's motivated vendetta against Dr. Sanjay Singh. It looked too much like the notorious police practice, so aptly described by S. Mulgaokar in his recent article in which the 'solution is reached first and details of evidence are filled in later'.

However, it is not the purpose of this article to dwell on the Syed Modi murder case. I would merely like to draw attention to the outburst by Sanjay Singh, widely quoted in the press, when obviously harassed and under great stress, he was asked by the press about certain confessions purportedly made by a witness under interrogation by the CBI. Sanjay Singh retorted that if he could get Rajiv Gandhi for just a few hours to be interrogated by the CBI he could extract his confession for complicity in the murder of Indira Gandhi.

### Indira Gandhi Murder

**I**t was an extraordinary outburst. No less extraordinary was the almost deafening silence with which it was received by even Congress (I) circles. Apart, possibly, from the effort to hustle through Parliament with panicky haste the reprehensible Defamation Bill, there was no other reaction by the Government. Could the Defamation Bill be attributed to Sanjay Singh's outburst? And does not the entire episode betray uncomfortable misgivings embedded deep in the public mind about the nature of the conspiracy surrounding the assassination of Indira Gandhi.

If the public does entertain secret doubts about Mrs. Gandhi's murder it cannot be blamed. The investigation and trail that followed the murder have been truly remarkable. That the assassination of a prime minister, not an

ordinary prime minister, but a world figure, should have extracted such a lackadaisical response from the Government is legitimate matter for public speculation.

The public cannot be blamed for wondering why the findings of the Thakkar Commission, set up to probe the events attending Mrs. Gandhi's murder, have not been revealed. The Thakkar Commission Report was not made available even to the court in which the alleged murderers of Mrs. Gandhi were on trial. What considerations could outweigh the need to explore every avenue to get at the truth behind the murder of India's late prime minister?

Not only that, prime witnesses, who were present at the spot when Mrs. Gandhi was shot dead, were not allowed to be cross-examined in court. Mr. R.K. Dhawan was one of them. Satwant Singh, facing death sentence for Mrs. Gandhi's murder, in his confession recorded before Bharat Bhushan, Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate, said: "Nobody suspected Beant Singh as he was having close friendship with R.K. Dhawan, the Secretary to Prime Minister".

### Satwant's Confession

**F**urther on in the same confession, Satwant Singh stated: "He (Beant Singh) repeatedly asked me to get myself posted by all means in the morning of 31st itself. He further asked me to take special care that no bullet hits Shri R.K. Dhawan...."

It might be recalled that R.K. Dhawan was approached by investigators on behalf of the Thakkar Commission. According to one version, Dhawan advised the investigators that if he was summoned by the Thakkar Commission, he would not keep back anything but reveal all he knew. Subsequently, he was not summoned to appear before the Commission.

Since Dhawan was removed from the Prime Minister's office, he has been leading a curious existence. He has been kept under surveillance. There has been speculation in the press about his rehabilitation. Dhawan became active on behalf of the Prime Minister during the crisis involving Giani Zail Singh when he was in Rashtrapati Bhawan. But for the rest, it appears that he being kept in cold storage as far as the Prime Minister is concerned. Dhawan has not been recalled, but he is not being persecuted. It is difficult to accept that R.K. Dhawan was prevented from appearing in the court trying Mrs. Gandhi's assassins for his own protection.

It is quite extraordinary that this man, who was Mrs. Gandhi's close confidant; who was present when she was killed; when Beant Singh, according to Satwant Singh, knew well; whom Beant Singh, again according to Satwant Singh, took particular care not to hurt in the shooting should not have been cross-examined by the

one of the accused in the conspiracy case sentenced to death. There is every reason to believe that Kehar Singh is innocent. A man is presumed innocent until proved guilty. No decisively clear evidence has been marshalled to prove Kehar Singh's guilt. On the contrary, a reasonable interpretation of the evidence collected suggests that Kehar Singh is being punished merely on suspicion unsubstantiated by hard evidence.

In fact, it is a case based on no evidence. Kehar Singh and his wife were on regular visiting terms with Beant Singh and his wife. In September, 1984 Kehar Singh invited Beant and his wife to the birthday celebrations of a grandchild. There, provocative speeches and songs were delivered and sung. Even Justice Shetty has acknowledged that there was no evidence to suggest that Kehar Singh had deliberately exposed Beant Singh to provocative bhajans. Was this proof of involvement in conspiracy to murder Mrs. Gandhi?

### By Rajinder Puri

court. The point is not at all that the man had anything to do with the murder. But that he obviously had to be examined as a witness. He wasn't. What kind of trial was this?

After killing Mrs. Gandhi, Beant Singh and Satwant Singh put down their weapons and surrendered. Disarmed, they were taken to the ITBP Guard Room. Both were made to sit on chairs. After a while, the police opened fire on these unarmed assassins. Twelve bullets hit Satwant, severely wounding him, while Beant Singh, the main figure in the conspiracy, died on the spot. There has been no satisfactory explanation about why the police killed in cold blood this unarmed assassin, a valuable witness who could have cleared the mystery. Was he silenced from revealing the truth? None of the police personnel who shot the disarmed and unresisting assassins, was prosecuted for the crime. What kind of investigation was this?

What kind of compulsions could have persuaded the Government to amend the law in order to prevent publication of the Thakkar Commission Report, prepared precisely to lay before the public and findings of a body functioning under the Commissions of Inquiry Act? What could be the contents of that Report? The public cannot be blamed for harbouring uneasy doubts.

These are the strange events in the light of which must be seen the unfortunate case of Kehar Singh,

### Bimal Khalsa's evidence

**T**he second incident noted by the honourable judges was the visit of Kehar Singh to Beant Singh's residence on October 17, 1984. Relying on the deposition of Bimal Khalsa, Beant's wife, Kehar and Beant were together on the roof of the house for fifteen to eighteen minutes. Bimal was not with them. She did not hear a word of what they said. Amazingly, from this alone Justice Shetty concludes: "It plainly indicates that Kehar Singh and Beant Singh were combined and conspiring together".

Note the observation of Justice Oza about this incident: "As far as the incident on 17th October is concerned, Bimal Khalsa in clear terms stated that Kehar Singh and Beant Singh had secret talks. She wanted to know it, but she was not given to understand. Apparently Kehar Singh being an elderly person did not indicate to her about their plan. If the attempt of Kehar Singh was to dissuade Beant Singh then there was no occasion for him to keep the matter secret from his wife. On the contrary he should have indicated to his wife also what Beant Singh was planning. These talks, therefore, as proved by Bimal Khalsa go a long way in establishing Kehar Singh being a party to the conspiracy.

Do they? Apart from guesswork and not very credible guesswork at that, there is little that the

learned judge has summoned. Kehar Singh's reticence before his wife, in case he tried to dissuade Beant Singh could well have arisen from the natural inclination of old-fashioned people not to take into confidence women who they take to be are habitually garrulous.

### Court Observation

**T**he third incident related to the visit to the Golden Temple by Beant Singh, Kehar Singh and their respective wives. The primary purpose of the visit was to attend a relative's marriage. No direct evidence of a conspiracy to kill Mrs. Gandhi has been culled from this visit. Only the fact, that for some time the two males kept aloof from the women and children while at the Temple. From this can one conclude that a conspiracy to kill Mrs. Gandhi was being hatched? According to Justice Shetty, apparently yes. This is what the learned judge observes in his judgment: "What is significant to note herein is about the relative character of Kehar Singh and Beant Singh. Even at the most sacred place they remained isolated from their wives and children. No wonder, birds of the same feather fly together..."

Passing a death sentence is not a light matter. Can such a judgment be made on the basis of suspicion and guesswork, in the absence of a single piece of hard evidence involving Kehar Singh in the conspiracy to kill Mrs. Gandhi? I suspect that few people would bother. Dispensing justice to Kehar Singh is not a popular cause. And the death of a leader as popular and important as Mrs. Gandhi would have so numbed the senses of most as to render inconsequential the death of one more Sikh, a friend of the assassin, even though his own guilt in the conspiracy might not have been established. Sometimes the sheer enormity of an event can lead to such callousness. And the belief that some punitive action has been taken, even though there might be the lurking doubt that the real culprits have not been apprehended, does offer comfort of a kind. But responsible sections of the citizenry should reflect. If the State can respond like this, generalise to equate assassins with their uninvolved friends and sentence to death both without discrimination, how is it different from the terrorist? He, too, is the victim of such prejudice and generalisation. One can only urge upon the President to revoke Kehar Singh's death sentence.

Courtesy : Indian Express

ਦਲੀ ਈ ਬੁਧਮੁਰਤੀ ਈ ਗਜ਼  
ਮਿਮਬੇ  
**ਮਿਮਬਾਈ**  
ਰੇਸ਼ ਡੇਲ  
From the House of  
**SIMCO HAIR FIXER**



**T**he violent incidents in the town of Bidar on the north-eastern tip of Karnataka during September 14 to 16, 1988, which let atleast six Sikh students dead, about 100 injured, and loss of property worth nearly Rs. 62 lakhs, indicate the increasing vulnerability of members of the minority communities to mob frenzy in any part of India that can be triggered off by communal elements at the slightest pretext.

A two-member team of the Delhi-based Nagrik Ekta Manch which toured Bidar and other neighbouring areas on a fact-finding mission from September 27 to October 1, witnessed the aftermath of the violence and interviewed a cross-section of people—both Sikhs and non-Sikhs, local representatives of the political parties as well as police officials and district administrators.

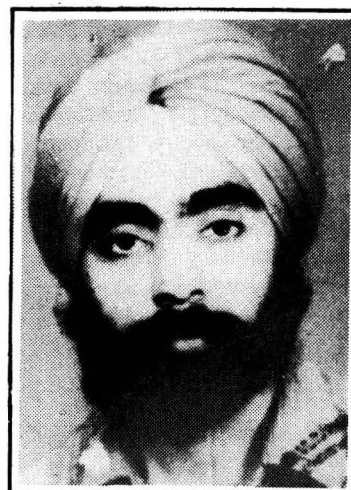
The team found that a fracas generated by an accumulation of factors of a purely non-communal nature was overnight transformed into an issue of Hindu-Sikh conflict with the Sikhs at the receiving end of a meticulously devised plan of looting, arson, physical assaults and savage killings. The team felt that part of the responsibility will have to be borne by the local police which not only failed to stop the miscreants right at the beginning, but it is also known to have turned a blind eye if not connived at the violence in some places.

The team also found that local leaders of the political parties, including the ruling Janata Party as well as the Congress (I) and the BJP, tended to acquiescence in the communal violence by repeatedly stressing certain allegations against the Sikh students (most of which on inquiries were found to be either baseless or exaggerated), and by remaining consistently reluctant to condemn the beastly killing of the six Sikh students. Instead of playing the responsible role of maintaining communal harmony, they appeared to have fallen prey to the spreading communal virus that tends to brand every Sikh as a belligerent delinquent, if not a suspected terrorist.

The team also noted the accumulation of tensions among the local people generated by an unfamiliar life style followed by a group of outsiders (both Sikh and non-Sikh students of the Guru Nanak Engineering College who come from a different cultural background). In an atmosphere already surcharged by suspicion against the Sikhs in general (fostered to a large extent by the media coverage of events in Punjab), such tensions against the outsiders escalated into hostilities directed selectively against the Sikh members of the community. As happens in such situations, while a handful of miscreants planned and carried out the operation, they were confident of the approval and acquiescence of an already prejudiced majority of the local people.

#### The Main Events

**P**iecing together bits of information from various sources, we could reconstruct the main sequence of events that rocked Bidar for three days. On the night of September 14, a few Sikh students who were returning from the centre of the town to their residences in Gandhinagar, were accosted by some Hindu boys who demanded from them subscription for the Ganesh Chaturthi celebrations that were due to begin the next day. It must be



Harvinder Singh Barabanki

mentioned here that the students of the Guru Nanak Engineering College (both Sikhs and non-Sikhs) had been subjected earlier to extortions by organizers of the festival. The students who were accosted on the night of September 14, refused to pay the subscription, as they claimed that they had paid up before. This led to a scuffle in the course of which the Sikh students got beaten up. The latter returned to the spot in a large number, and damaged a few vehicles and shops belonging to the Hindus. In retaliation, late at night a group of Hindu young men struck at the houses where the Sikh students were staying and burnt their scooters.

During the September 14th night, however, a meticulous plot was apparently hatched. A meeting was held that night under the auspices of Muddha, a Commission agent in Gandhigunj area, where it is believed that the future course of action was decided upon. The planned nature of the attacks—use of petrol, selective assaults on all Sikhs, burning of the houses, of Muslim landlords and sparing those owned by the Hindus—indicates the well-thought out strategy that was shaped at the meeting on the 14th night.

From the morning of the 15th a regular onslaught began—not only

on the Sikh students who were staying at the new colonies of Vidyanagar, Gandhinagar and Kumarwara, but also against houses and shops owned by other Sikhs (businessmen, retired Air Force personnel, etc) in different parts of the town.

Although the spree of looting and physical assaults came to an end by September 16, tensions continued and spread beyond Bidar. On September 25, the Nishan Sahib on top of the Janawada Gurdwara some 15 kilometres away from Bidar was removed and torn up by some miscreants. Earlier the same day the Sikhs had gone to the Gurdwara under police escort to hoist their flag.

#### The Background: Students And The Local Population

**T**he historical past of Bidar, to a large extent, explains the concentration of Sikhs in the city. During his extensive tours Guru Nanak visited the Daccan, and was believed to have stayed near the town—the site of the present Gurdwara. One of the first 'panj piyaras' (the five beloved baptised by Guru Govind Singh) Sahib Chand, hailed from Bidar. Given these historical connections, Bidar became an important pilgrimage for Sikhs from all over the country.

In addition to the descendants of the baptised Sikhs of the south—known as 'Dakhni Sikhs'—Sikh migrants came from the North and settled down here, first as soldiers for the local landlords, who later became a part of the Nizam's irregular army—Fauj-e-beguida. During the post-Independence period, as elsewhere Sikhs migrated to Bidar and built up flourishing trade and commercial activities, like hotel, automobile repair shops, etc. Given both the historically rooted connections and its image as a 'safe' place, following the 1984 killings of Sikhs in the north, many Sikh families chose to send their sons to Bidar. As everyone we talked to agreed, Bidar had a record of amicable Sikh-Hindu relations, and even during the worst days following Mrs. Gandhi's assassination there were no attacks on Sikhs in Bidar.

Mr Joga Singh, a Sikh businessman who operated from Hyderabad, set up the Engineering College in 1980 in the northern part of the city. Besides the College, there is a polytechnic, a public school and a hospital, all run under Mr Joga Singh's auspices. The College was earlier managed

by the Gurudwara Prabandhak committee—also headed by Mr Singh. Later in 1987 he set up a trust—the Guru Nanak Dev Foundation Trust—which replaced the Prabandhak Committee in the running of the institutions. The Trust includes five life-members all of whom are said to be related to Mr Singh. It is speculated that Mr Singh set up the Trust to keep the properties under his control.

Of the 1300 odd students of the polytechnic and the Engineering College, the number of Sikh students varied every year between 40 to 47 percent, never exceeding 50 percent at any stage. The majority of the students are from north India—Punjab, Kashmir, Uttar Pradesh, Rajasthan—followed by boys from Andhra Pradesh and Karnataka. Both the students and the teachers of the Engineering College (the bulk of the teachers are again non-Sikhs) told us in one voice that relations between the Sikh and non-Sikh students in the campus had always been cordial. Indeed we learnt of Hindu boys protecting Sikh students and taking them away to safety during the recent disturbances. The teachers claimed that, by and large, the students were a highly disciplined lot.

Given the paucity of hostel accommodation on the campus, many of the students rented houses in the neighbouring new colonies of Gandhinagar, Vidyanagar and the State Bank of India complex, paying a monthly rent of Rs.200 to Rs.300 for one room, often shared by two or three of them.

#### Affluence

**A** few words on the socio-economic composition of the student community are necessary at this stage. As is common in Karnataka, the Engineering College is also known to charge high capitation fees from students—the rates ranging from Rs.20000 to Rs.50000. A large number of students come from rich families—affluent farmers and businessmen. According to the students we interviewed, while the sons of the rich spent on an average Rs.2000 a month, the monthly expenditure of those coming from a less affluent background came to about Rs.800. The upper strata came mainly from Punjab and Delhi.

The life style followed by the students—particularly the rich amongst them—seemed to have created feelings of envy and contention among the local population. What however is rather

disturbing is that although the rich students (both Sikhs and non-Sikhs) might have followed a similar life style, it was only the Sikhs who were selected for stringent criticism by the local Hindus. Repeatedly we heard complaints about the behaviour of the Sikh students who were 'accused' of flaunting their wealth, getting involved in drunken brawls in cinema houses and other places, and of misbehaving with local girls. Some of the stories making the rounds during our visit were quite lurid and seemed to have

**A disturbing aspect is in the reporting of Bi national dailies. Although took place between September bodies of the four S recovered from a well it was almost a week later th Press came to know happen**

stemmed from one common source. (i) the Sikh students indulged in taking snapshots of the women of the locality when the latter came out to take their bath at the public water pump; (ii) the Sikh students were responsible for the growth of prostitution in the area; (iii) the Sikh students raped girls and used them for making bluefilms. As support for these allegations, the local BJP leader, Mr Nandkishore Verma, produced a photograph showing the upper portion of a bare-bodied couple—a bearded young man with his hands around the shoulders of a girl facing the camera. Mr Verma



Mr Joga Singh speaking (Retd) when the lat



## Launch Report

# ns Failed At Bidar

(Correspondent)

claimed that it was one of the many photographs recovered from the houses of the Sikh students. Although he asserted that hundreds of such photographs had been handed over to the police, the I.G. Mr Anandan whom we interviewed later denied knowledge of any such photographs.

We visited some of the houses in Gandhinagar which were attacked and burnt down by the miscreants. Half-burnt books, belongings and other belongings were still scattered around. The only possessions of the Sikh stu-

often get involved in local clashes. Two students of the Engineering College whom we interviewed—Jatinder Singh, a Sikh student in his final year (mechanical) and his friend, a non-Sikh in the same class P.V. Rajeswara Rao—confirmed that there were a few cases of fights between the students and the local youth. They added: "When the clash took place on the night of 14th September, we thought this was in the nature of similar fights in the past and would soon blow over as used to happen. We never thought that it would take on the colour of a Hindu-Sikh fight". The two students also admitted that some students brought prostitutes to their houses, but that this was not a widespread phenomenon. Some time ago, the police raided a house when the students were watching a blue film. But there was no question of any of the students making blue films, they asserted.

The impression that we gathered from our talks with various people was that the G.N.D. Engineering College could have also been affected to some extent by the vices that characterize the life-style of some upper class youth in any metropolitan campus. The pampered and well-to-do sons of the nouveau rich who are found swaggering and bullying over others, showing off their cars and other symbols of status, indulging in eve-teasing in buses and public places—in Delhi, Bombay or Calcutta—have their counterparts even in a small town like Bidar, where they stick out like a sore thumb. But what must be stressed in this connection is that these spoilt boys in Bidar did not come only from Sikh families, but also from rich non-Sikh families of neighbouring areas as well as from north India.

Why then were only the Sikh students picked out for comment and assaults? The nature of the operation—gruesome killings and calculated destruction of property—was out of all proportion to the alleged provocation by the Sikh students. While the behaviour of some of the students may well have provoked elements in the local population, we found that the stories spread about them were highly exaggerated. If they really were a menace—as made out to be by some people—why were there no complaints filed with the police about their alleged exploitation of local women and cases of rape? In any case, what is completely unacceptable is the tendency to employ these 'petty conflicts' as factors of explanations

and justification for what has happened.

During our interviews in Bidar town, district Congress (I) president Chandrakant Sindhore told us that there was a "limit to our tolerance" regarding the alleged Sikh students' behaviour. The city Janata party president, Ramesh Nimbule echoed the same sentiments "We tolerated for four years, and then we had to respond". The local BJP leader, Nandkishore Verma said that there was no planning behind the violence; it was an "emotional outburst" of the people against the Sikh students. He complained that the police were arresting innocent people.

On the basis of these facts notwithstanding the claims to the contrary made by the local politicians we cannot escape the conclusion that the violence in Bidar from September 14 to 16 had a definite communal character directed against Sikhs in general. We also feel that the lurid stories about the Sikh students being circulated in Bidar could well have been manufactured as an afterthought to rationalize and justify the violence. The uniform pattern of the stories (e.g. taking snapshots of women bathing, raping of girls, production of blue films, etc.) leads us to suspect that their source could be a common rumour mill.

### The Local Hindu Youth

We would in this connection like to take up the other theory that the Sikh students of the Engineering College represented "an island of affluence in the midst of an ocean of poverty", as a result of which they became targets of attacks by the poor, disgruntled neighbours. Although Bidar is a 'backward district', the town has grown rapidly over the last few years proudly displaying the usual symbols of urban prosperity—bars, cinema houses, shops and markets, modern residential complexes. As in other Indian cities, these are pockets of prosperity in the midst of squalor represented by jhuggy-jhupries, and colonies with inadequate sanitation. (Incidentally, the areas like Gandhinagar where many of the Sikh students lived, were lower middle class areas, badly serviced by sanitation facilities. Hence the prevalence of stories about watching local women bathing at wells, etc.) To argue that the Sikh students represented "the only island of influence in the town" would be a travesty of facts. There is a substantial middle and upper-middle class in this town of over one lakh.

Even of the six families considered very rich in Bidar, while there is one Sikh (Mr Joga Singh, the founder of the Engineering College), there is a Muslim, and the others are north Indian Hindus as well as local Kannadigas. The Congress (I) leader Mr Chandra Kant Sindhor for instance owns a huge shopping cum hotel complex in the heart of the town. His family owns the biggest petrol pump in town, which incidentally is suspected to have supplied petrol to miscreants during the recent events.. The sons of these new



Gurrinder Singh

rich Hindu businessmen and traders have emerged as a privileged community in Bidar. Like their counterparts in other metropolitan cities, they are assured of enough money and protection, thanks to their family background and powerful connections, and can therefore indulge in all kinds of anti-social activities with impunity. It is they who head a number of gangs in Bidar town, incidentally identified by the Sikh victims as elements central to the recent violence.

From a list of suspects submitted to the police by the Sikh students we could make out that a large number of them came from Hindu families of traders and businessmen, and well-to-do professionals. They were leaders of the gangs which had been operating in Bidar for quite sometime now. One such gang is the 25-member Navy (an acronym formed from the first letters of the names of four of its leaders), the president of which is the son of the editor of a local newspaper. Two similar gangs are Swagat and Fire-Force.

A further study of the individual suspects named in the list reveals their socio-economic background. Raju Agarwal, for instance, is the brother of a municipal councillor who also happens to be the owner of a hotel. Chandu Patil, Viju Patil and Somu Patil are three brothers

from a family that runs a transport business. Vasavara Shetkar and his three sons own an engineering firm. Sanjay and Ajay Sail are owners of a bar and restaurant.

Gangs like Navy and Fire Force received a fillip for their anti-social activities in recent years from a curious source—the annual Ganesh Chaturthi festival. The festival, never a widespread phenomenon in Bidar in the past, has in last few years seen a sudden proliferation of images of Ganesh being set up in public places, and an increase in the number of Ganesh festivals in different parts of the city. Some local people attribute this to the influence from neighbouring Hyderabad, where too during the last few years the Ganesh Chaturthi festival had become a big occasion for rallying Hindus on a militant platform, marked by fiery speeches on the need for Hindu unity and demonstrations of martial art. It is also an occasion to extort large sums.

Gangs like Navy and Fire Force, we were told, have been in the forefront in setting up 'Ganesh Mandals' or community committees for celebrating Ganesh Chaturthi in different parts of the city. The number rose to an astonishing 65 locations this year. Members of the gangs had installed images of Ganesh in public parks and on the main roads. Local political leaders of the Congress (I) and BJP praised the activities of these groups and told us that they were doing "valuable social work". But from other sources we learnt that their 'social work' was not confined to merely setting up 'Ganesh Mandals' and encroaching on public places for installing idols.

A ex-municipal councillor who prefers to remain anonymous told us that on September 11, (three days before the anti-Sikh troubles started) during the elections to the students' union in a local college, gangsters sought to provoke a clash between Hindus and Muslims. They later brought out a procession raising slogans like "Hinduon ke liye Hindustan, Musalmanon ke liye kabrastan". (Hindustan is for Hindus, and the graveyard for the Muslims). He asked the police authorities to take steps against these miscreants. The police did hold a peace committee meeting on September 13 on the eve of the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. But this was clearly inadequate as is evident from later events. It was the same miscreants belonging to these notorious gangs, who went around the town, extorting money from people in the name of collecting subscription for the Ganesh Chaturthi festival. The Sikh students were made special targets of these extortion drives.

### Disturbing Trend

The controversy over collecting subscriptions which was the immediate spark for the disturbances in Bidar, points out to a disturbing trend developing in almost all metropolitan towns in India. Hindu religious festivals have become excuses—

Continued on page

the inordinate delay in incidents in the disturbances over 14 and 16, and the students were on September 18, readers of the national about the ghastly

nts which could possibly have inspired the salacious rumours about their alleged libidinous tastes were a few pin-ups still stuck on the walls. They were pictures of film actresses, Western models, cricketers—pictures familiar to any campus student.

### Not Blameless

This is not to argue that all students were always blameless. In any other campus, they were the same elements, irrespective of the fact whether they were Sikhs or non-Sikhs. Several people pointed out that these elements



Gen J.S. Aurora visited Bidar



Continued from page 9

sanctioned by religion—for anti-social gangs to extort money from citizens. Almost every year there are reports of assaults on unwilling people who had refused to pay money to volunteers of local clubs demanding subscriptions for organising religious festivals—whether Dusserah or Dipavali in Delhi and north Indian towns, or Ganesh Chaturthi in Bombay and west Indian towns, or Durga puja and Kali puja in Calcutta and other areas of West Bengal. The money demanded from individuals ranges from Rs.10 to Rs.500.

In this connection, it must be added that one of the organisations in Bidar found to be forcibly collecting money from the Sikh students is called the New Shiv Sena. The leaders of the organisation mentioned by the Sikh students in the list that they submitted to the police are Dasrath Dobby, Raghu Dobby, and Venkatrao—the latter known in police records as a criminal called Venkati. The RSS also figures in the list. One of the suspects named is Ajay Singh, the younger son of Brijpal Singh, a local RSS leader.

The suspected involvement of members of overtly Hindu communal organisations like the Shiv Sena and the RSS in the Bidar disturbances should be a matter of serious concern.

#### The Medical College And The Capitation Fees:

Higher education, particularly technical education is a highly lucrative business in Karnataka. Seats in medical and engineering colleges are virtually sold off to the highest bidder although this price is euphemistically called a 'donation'. These 'donations' have been known to vary from a few thousand rupees to several lakhs of rupees per seat depending upon the institution and its general standing. Despite election time promises, the Janata Government of Mr R.K.Hegde had been unable to do away with this scourge of capitation fees.

The substantial pickings to be had from setting up institutions of higher learning would also expectedly lead to competition amongst potential investors which, in turn, involves seeking patronage at the political level for securing permission from the Government. Competing claims for setting up a new Medical College at Bidar were amongst the underlying causes for the growth of tension and hostility within the local residents, particularly the more affluent and influential, against the Sikh community.

The Guru Nanak Dev Foundation Trust which already runs a high school, junior college, polytechnic and the Engineering College is one of the applicants for sanction of a medical college. It is said that on the basis of his personal equation with the Chief Minister, S. Joga Singh, Chairman of the Trust, was successful in obtaining a commitment from Mr R.K.Hegde that the College would indeed be awarded to the Trust. In

order to strengthen his claim, S. Joga Singh expanded the clinic at Gurudwara Nanak Jhira into a 500 bedded hospital by converting the guest house which was earlier used by pilgrims. The confidant campaign for the medical college launched by S.Joga Singh in his capacity as Chairman of the Trust created not a little resentment amongst other contenders for the potential profit making Medical College. To counter the GNDFT, a campaign was launched by three other educational societies operating in Bidar who organised a bandh in the District earlier this year, following it up with a joint memorandum to the Chief Minister in July 1988 signed by all the legislators of the District as well as some other prominent citizens. One of these three societies, the Rashtriya Rathanatamak Karya Samithi, which runs the Pharmacy Diploma College and whose Chairman is Mr Kashinath Rao Belure a former Janata Party legislator, had also started the construction of a 500 bedded hospital since this was a precondition for being eligible to run a medical college. This building on the outskirts of Bidar beyond the Air Force area, has barely reached the plinth level, whereas the Guru Nanak Dev Foundation Trust infrastructure is as good as complete.

#### Allegations

In the joint memorandum presented to the Chief Minister a number of allegations have been levelled at the Trust charging them with maladministration of the existing institutions resulting in 'dissatisfaction' and 'annoyance' amongst the local citizens and "disturbance of public peace and... a feeling of insecurity in the minds of people of Bidar District". Our enquiries however, revealed a somewhat different picture. According to some of the faculty members, the Engineering College has always insisted on strict discipline inside the campus and has during the last few years been achieving the best academic results in Gulbarga University, to which it is affiliated. These teachers (it becomes necessary to point out that they were not Sikhs) were also quick to deny the stories doing the rounds in Bidar that local students were not being given admission in the College, that the large majority of the students belonged to the Sikh community, that the faculty also comprised largely of Sikh teachers and ludicrous as it may sound, that non-Sikh students were not allowed to sit in the front rows of the class.

The facts are that 10% of seats have been taken by local candidates, about 45% of the students are Sikh, whereas the majority 55% are from other communities, predominantly Hindu other than 4 or 5 teachers, the rest all belong to the Hindu community. The point is not that these facts by themselves prove or disapprove any particular hypothesis, but that they expose the falsity of the deliberate and insidious rumour cam-

paign that has been unleashed in Bidar. It came as a great surprise that local leaders of all the three main political parties in the district—namely Janata, Congress (I) and BJP—not only provided a similar account of the happenings, virtually the same analysis of the causes, and were unanimous in laying the entire blame on the Sikh students. There was no condemnation or even remorse expressed by these local leaders about the violence. Rather, at the first Peace Committee meeting on 16 September, demands were made to close down all 'Sikh' institutions and throw out the Sikhs from Bidar. The only protest came from Mr Brijpal a former freedom fighter. In these circles, there was general support for the candidature of Mr Kashinath Rao Belure, who also belongs to the dominant Lingayat caste for the Medical College. What is more, to buttress their support they did not hesitate in making allegations against the Guru Nanak Dev Foundation Trust and its Chairman, S. Joga Singh. In contrast, one of the senior Bidar based journalists was emphatic in his view that not only was the Engineering College efficiently managed but "none but Joga Singh would be able to run a Medical College in Bidar".

This is by no means to suggest that S. Joga Singh can be held blameless whilst apportioning responsibility for the building up of tensions and hostilities. It is evident that S. Joga Singh has not only built up substantial business interests and amassed considerable wealth but has also acquired a degree of influence both in Hyderabad and Bangalore. What is more, by converting the Guru Nanak Dev Foundation from a registered society into a trust largely comprising of his family members, he has alienated the wider community. The fact that one section of the Sikh community led by Sant Esher Singh of Gurudwara Gosha Mahal itself demanded his excommunication from the fold at the Bhog at Gurudwara Nanak Jhira on October 2 is an indication of the controversy surrounding this aggressively successful entrepreneur.

#### Role Of The Police

The local police has come in for criticism by all in Bidar—the Sikh students, the political party leaders, the ordinary citizens. From our investigation, we feel

that the police should/could have intervened much earlier. Tensions between the students and the local population had been on the increase for quite some time. The rise of the Hindu communal groups, their connivance with the local gangsters, and their open display of communally surcharged emotions (e.g. the events preceding the Ganesh Chaturthi festival)—all these were apparently allowed a free rein in spite of warnings sounded by some citizens like the ex-municipal councillor mentioned earlier. Even when the violence started—on the night of September 14—the police acted in a lackadaisical manner. The ex-councillor who was dining at a friend's place that evening in Badruddin colony near Gandhinagar (where 80% of the Sikh students live), sensed that trouble was brewing after he heard about the first attack on the Sikh students on the question of payment of subscription. He rang up the SP, Dr Umapathi, that very night asking him to send a police force to the affected area. But only four constables were sent to the spot. He added that in the past too the police invariably failed to tackle local incidents, and respond promptly to complaints. In front of the Engineering College on Sep-

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## Punjab Needs Political Initiative

A Press Release By  
Justice A.S. Bains  
19.9.1988

**D**ear Prime Minister,  
Since you have your group of Dun School admirers, advisors and guides, may we give you the needed school boy's advice that it is better late than never and request you to solve Punjab problem by political initiative.

Without mincing words, we would like to express our fears about the efficacy of your Punjab visit and submit that the scope of your visit and the proposed package of economic concessions, you had announced on that day, was vague, blurred and narrow. By doing so you have acted like the French Empress, Marie Antoinette, who advised the famine stricken people to eat cakes when bread was not available. Please give us bread and confine yourself to eating cakes.

Punjab needs a political initiative rather than economic concessions. Justice to the state can be done only if the democratic norms are observed in letter and spirit and the policy of using political as well as diesel operated bulldozers in the interest of political expediency is ceased.

The recent history of Centre-Punjab relations shows that political decisions have been taken like the decisions of the stock exchange manipulators. It seems that your regime has had power brokers, just as there are share brokers. This market tendency should cease and political decisions should be based on merits and not like quotable shares in the market.

Since the Punjab problem has been complicated by the persistent violations of human rights by the Central and State Governments over the past few years, a rolling back of the evil process could, in the opinion of P.H.R.O. contribute a great deal towards restoring normalcy so that a solution could be devised within the democratic framework rather than through conflicts and war (bulldozers).

Our Organisation has made a set of recommendations to help solve Punjab problem. The Recommendations are:-

1. In the first instance, the 59th Amendment to the Constitution should be rescinded. In addition, all the anti-democratic black laws enacted for Punjab should be repealed.

2. All prisoners held in connection with the Punjab problem should be set free or tried under

the normal democratic laws.

3. All those responsible for the November 1984 massacre of Sikhs following Mrs Gandhi's assassination should be brought to book as speedily as possible. Those responsible for fake encounters in Punjab should also face the process of law.

4. There should be a head-count of the casualties resulting from the political turmoil in Punjab. There is absence of knowledge of those who suffered at the hands of the State and its agencies. The State has been odd-handed all these years: it has only given the lists of casualties as a result of violence indulged in by private groups and individuals. Without the head-count, a proper plan of relief and rehabilitation can't be thought of.

5. Those who lost their positions in public and private sector services as a sequel to the Punjab should be reinstated. These include military and police officials whose services were dispensed with under emotional stress by the authorities.

6. In keeping with the spirit and social aims of the national freedom movement reflected finally in the All India Congress Working Committee resolution favouring the creation of a "Punjabi speaking State out of the (then) existing State of Punjab", strictly on linguistic basis. Thus, not only the Punjabi speaking areas in Haryana and Rajasthan but also those in Himachal Pradesh should be merged into Punjab. More specifically the areas comprising Bhakra, Pong and other hydro-electric projects should be transferred to Punjab.

7. The constitutional right on Punjab to its river water resources (Entry 17, List II, Schedule 7) should be restored and respected in toto and not curbed or curtailed through veious means. In turn, Punjab should show goodwill towards its neighbours and allow water supplies on the basis of equitable bilateral, time-bound agreement on consideration. The controversial, politically motivated, S.Y.L. canal should be dismantled forthwith.

These recommendations, if honestly implemented in toto unilaterally by your government, would creat its own momentum to save the way for a negotiated settlement of the Punjab issue.

Your failure to take political initiative on these lines will certainly prove the Chief Minister of Haryana, Mr. Devi Lal, and the people of Punjab's view right that Rajiv Government can't solve Punjab problem as the present "rootless" rulers are involved in promoting discord and divisions among the people in order to sustain themselves in power.

Hoping to hear your bold decisions,

Yours Sincerely, etc.

## Jain Banerji Suggestion

Continued from page 5

cution story and proceeds to uphold or demolish it depending on the available evidence. But Mr Gupta, while dismissing the case, did not even name the accused, let alone going into the charge of their having having killed Sikhs.

Apart from pointing out this fundamental inadequacy in the judgement, the committee told the government by way of an example that the prosecution story was at least good enough for the courts to convict one Nem Chand. According to the prosecution, an assistant comissioner of police (ACP) had shot Nem Chand in his leg when he was in a mob attacking Sikhs. The sign of his injury had corroborated the prosecution story. Besides, the ACP had identified him in the Court.

The Committee also informed the government that the police and prosecution agency were equally to be blamed for the acquittal. They had, for instance, made out the case to be not of "murder" but of "culpable homicide not amounting to murder". This is a travesty of truth as "culpable homicide not amounting to murder" implies that the accused poured kerosene on their victims and burnt them to

death without actually intending to kill them. The punishment for this allegedly intentionless killing is, of course, less than that for murder.

The committee, comprising a former high court judge, Mr M.L.Jain and a former director of the CBI, Mr A.K. Banerjee was set up on the suggestion of the Rangnath Misra Commission to identify culprits and ensure proper and speedy prosecution.

In view of the tardy progress of about 200 riot cases spread over various courts, the committee first suggested the creation of one or two special courts to deal with them expeditiously. The government shot down the proposal, although it had set up a special court for just one murder trial—that of Mrs Gandhi.

Next, the committee instructed the police to register a murder case against the former Congress MP, Mr Sajjan Kumar, and eight others. The police simply sat over the instruction for 40 days despite reminders. The burden was lifted off the police when a Congress worker, Mr Brahma Nand Gupta, who is one of the accused in the recommended case, obtained a stay order from the Delhi High


Court which suspended the committee's power to recommend registration of fresh cases. The matter has been pending before the court for almost a year.

Though ostensibly assigned to follow up cases, the committee has never been supplied with copies of the judgements as and when they are delivered. With its first recommendation for appeal being turned down, its relevance has been further diluted.

But while appointing the committee, the government had cited the same as evidence of its sincerity to get the guilty punished. The Misra Commission itself admitted that as the police were guilty of negligence and complicity they could not be expected to—and had not—registered or investigated the cases properly.

Where the police and prosecution had not rendered a case altogether ineffective, the courts acquitted the accused on flimsy grounds. It was by sheer chance that committee recently came across one glaring case of injustice.

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## Police And Politicians Failed At Bidar

September 15, we believe that the inadequacy of the police force combined with the connivance of some policemen with the rioters, aggravated the situation. While some people blame the SP. Dr. Umapathi as incompetent, others gave him the benefit of doubt by pointing out that even with the limited manpower he had, he tried his best to keep the warring groups apart by restraining the students from coming out of the Engineering College and keeping the mobs at bay outside. But in the process, instead of the marauding rioters it was the students on the opposite side who had to bear the brunt of the police action. Students informed us that the police raided hostel No.2 on the campus where some students had taken shelter, and indiscriminately beat them up.

The police was also nowhere around when the miscreants started attacking Sikh owned shops and their houses in the centre of the town.

In view of the pathetic performance of the police, one can quite understand the sentiments of the Sikh citizens who are demanding the suspension of the SP. Dr. Umapathi. The demand was made when the Chief Minister visited the Gurudwara and the students raised slogans against the S.P. who had to be removed to safety by a police escort.

Although everyone agrees that the arrival of the DIG Mr Pawate on the evening of September 15, with his forces saved the situation from further deterioration, one wonders why it took him so long to come with reinforcements. Gulbarga, from where he came, is only 120 kms away from Bidar. Yet, he reached Bidar only at around 5.30 p.m. While credit should be paid to him for rescuing the besieged students from the Engineering College and transporting by the KSRP (Karnataka Special Reserve Police) could not restore order in the town. On September 16, the miscreants attacked the polytechnic and set on fire the house of a Sikh ex-serviceman. On the night of September 26-27, there was an attempt to loot a bank. In some areas of the town, night patrolling by the local police had stopped altogether from September 15.

By September 29, the police had arrested 104 people. Three murder cases had been registered. When asked whether the arrested included those who figure in the list of suspects submitted by the Sikh students, the IG Mr Anandan told us that some of them had been apprehended.

### Role Of The Press:

A disturbing aspect is the inordinate delay in the reporting of Bidar incidents in the national dailies. Although the disturbances took place between September 14 and 16, and the bodies of the four

Sikh students were recovered from a well on September 18, it was almost a week later that readers of the national Press came to know about the ghastly happenings. Our inquiries revealed that the local police misled the representative of a national news agency by giving out the story that a minor clash had taken place over an eve-teasing incident. But by the 18th it should have been clear that the incidents were of a far more serious dimension and communal at that. Yet, it took some days for the national dailies to react and start reporting the disturbances.

Even when reporting the incidents, some of the national dailies seemed to add more importance to the allegations of eve-teasing than the essential communal motivations as causes of the violence.

We feel that both the local and the national press, instead of depending on police briefings and taking their words at face value, should have made independent inquiries to ascertain the truth. Immediate publication of a faithful account of the incidents would have shown that the Sikhs in this case were not the culprits, but the victims of a communal outrage. This could have prevented the circulation of rumours that warped the public mind. The rumours shaped their psychology in a way as to make a large section of the Bidar people tacitly approve of the anti-Sikh violence.

### Behaviour Of The Political Parties:

Whilst the involvement of all the political parties at the local level was of a piece—but it in terms of actual participation in the violence, material and moral support to the criminal elements, or through offering rationalisation of the attack on the Sikh students after the event—there are indications of some equivocation at the State level. In the first place there was no outright condemnation of the killings, arson and looting. On the contrary, there was a strange silence from the State leadership for the first several days. Even on the visit of the Chief Minister and Mr R.K. Hegde, the public statements made, referred to the 'unfortunate' and 'tragic' happenings rather than an unequivocal indictment of the culprits. Subsequently, in a statement made in the State Assembly, the Chief Minister referred to the increase in eve-teasing over the past few years and the failure of the police to control this as a possible cause to tension.

This would suggest that the expost rationalisation being put across by the local apologists has found a sympathetic listener in Mr S.P. Bommali, despite the fact that there have been no complaints about eve-teasing or misbehaviour made to the police in the past, as was confirmed to us by Mr Anandman, Inspector General of

Police. One of the leaders of the 45,000 strong Muslim Community (approximately 1/3 of the population) in Bidar complained bitterly that the police did not allow them to meet the Chief Minister during his visit and represent their point of view. As a result of the attack on Sikh students and the destruction of the property owned by Muslims, a sense of insecurity had grown among the latter and their confidence in the local police had diminished. Although the State Government has been quick to appoint a judicial commission of enquiry and strengthen police arrangements to restore peace, it would seem that the pressure of Bidar's 'power lobbies' is being felt in Bangalore. Whether this would further influence the responses of the State Government in terms of action to be taken to re-establish confidence amongst the minorities remains to be seen.

We can only hope that political considerations and pressure from the dominant caste group would not take precedence over the need to combat the communal virus which has expressed itself against the relatively small Sikh minority in South India for the first time. What is, however, gratifying is that there has been no serious attempts so far to politicise the Bidar tragedy despite some 'unnecessary' initial noises made by the Congress (I) and a few of its front organisations in Delhi. At the same time, it would be unfortunate if this was because of a tacit understanding to play down the gravity of the matter. The events at Bidar need to be discussed and debated widely so that effective steps are taken to restore communal harmony in the disturbed area and prevent similar occurrences elsewhere.

### National Implications

Attempts like those of Mr Balasaheb Deoras to dismiss Bidar as a 'local matter' notwithstanding, the terrible events of the 15 and 16 September and their underlying causes have wider implications for the entire country. This has been the first major attack against the Sikh community since the 1984 massacre in Delhi following Mrs Gandhi's assassination. It is significant that such an incident should take place in one of the southern States, where the Sikh population is comparatively small and which saw relatively less ugliness in 1984. Despite this, an anti-Sikh sentiment has emerged in a place with rarely any instance of communal conflict of any kind. During the course of our investigations, it became only too clear that not only was there a distinct lack of sympathy for the victims but a commonly held stereotype image of the Sikh as aggressive, violent and 'anti-national'. The primary cause for this appears to be the constant and mindless propaganda by the official media through television and radio about

the situation in Punjab which has led people to believe that only Hindus are being killed by the terrorists. Yet, among the victims of Khalistan terrorism, no less than 40% are Sikhs—many among whom died while trying to resist the terrorists or protecting their Hindu neighbours. The spread of such communal sentiments is a matter of serious concern and needs to be countered without loss of any more time.

The stereotype of the Sikh as a potential terrorist is further reinforced by comments and utterances, often made by 'responsible' people like political leaders. In Bidar for instance, the Congress (I) leader, Mr Chandrakant Sindhur told us that the Sikh students studying at the Bidar Engineering College who were sent by their parents from Delhi had "terrorist connections". We learnt that an ex-MP belonging to the BJP had submitted a petition to the former Chief Minister, Mr Hedge, warning him against giving approval to Mr Joga Singh's proposal of a medical college since it would help the Khalistanis. One can well imagine the impact of such comments and opinions on the non-Sikh public mind.

### Growing Fundamentalism

A second and, in our view, equally significant lesson from Bidar, is that there are unmistakable trends of a growing Hindu fundamentalism with militant overtones in many parts of the country. The recent popularity of the Ganesh pooja in Bidar seems to have been inspired by the massive processions and rallies organised in Hyderabad by the B.J.P. A number of so-called 'social' groups have sprung up, ostensibly to establish Ganesh mandals, but which can easily be utilised for instigating mob violence, as was witnessed in the September riots. It is also important to point out that these gangs and the violent mobs were led by neo-rich middle class youth who were able to mobilise other lumpen elements to go on a rampage. The emergence of this type of a middle class is evident in all such small and medium sized towns across the country. The possible nexus between the emergence of this middle class and the rising Hindu fundamentalism deserves to be examined in greater depth as its implications could indeed be widespread and serious.

The South Indian States had till recently been free of anti-Sikh population may feel threatened by possible terrorist retaliation. In the wake of the Bidar disturbances, at least one Khalistani terrorist organisation had come out with threats of attack against the Karnataka state emporium and the information office in Delhi. In the South, Andhra Pradesh leads in the concentration of Sikh population, most of it in Hyderabad city. In 1984, after the assassination of Mrs Gandhi, an explosive situation

threatened to develop when Congress (I) demonstrators planned to take out a procession in front of a gurudwara. Intervention by some prominent citizens and civil liberties groups however prevented any untoward incident. But the sudden explosion in Bidar—without any provocation whatsoever—has bred a sense of insecurity among the Sikhs in Hyderabad. The increasingly aggressive tone of the Ganesh Chaturthi festivities in Hyderabad every year is viewed with apprehension not only by Sikhs, but Muslims too, who in 1984 had been victims of widespread communal riots. Since it was the Ganesh Chaturthi festival which indirectly sparked off the violence in Bidar—so near Hyderabad—the religious occasion is likely to become a source of perpetual tension every year.

Although situated far away from Bidar, the Karnatak capital Bangalore has not escaped the tensions generated by the Bidar incidents. We visited the Sikh gurudwara at Ulsoor in the heart of the city, and were told by the office secretary that it had received threatening letters.

### Summing Up

Bidar represents a graphic microcosm of social processes that we can neglect only at our own peril. Over the last decade, we have seen how yet another insecure minority, the Sikhs, has not only been created but that a climate of ill-will and hostility surrounds it. Consequently, even in a locality like Bidar, far away from the surcharged Hindu-Sikh atmosphere of the north and where the earlier holocaust had been unable to register its presence, a conjuncture of essentially local factors when placed in a milieu marked by communal feelings can lead to tragic consequences. What begins possibly as a business rivalry amongst powerful contending groups to monopolise a source of potential profits, draws upon communal stereotypes and resentments, employs local hooligans and utilising the backdrop of a religious festival leads to the death of innocent Sikh students, assaults on many others, destruction and looting of property, and a major fracture in inter-community relations. All this is assisted by a larger shared feeling that Sikhs are 'legitimate targets', and the relative ineptitude of the local administration.

### Recommendations

On the basis of our findings and as a result of discussions with a cross section of people in Bidar, Hyderabad, Bangalore and Delhi it is our view that urgent action is required to be taken on the following lines:

Arrest and prosecution of those involved in the killings, beatings, arson and looting. Many of these persons have been identified by the students and others and a list has been made available to the

Continued on page 13



**Conflict: Right to Property and Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution**, Victor Z. Narively, Sterling Publishers Pvt Ltd, New Delhi, 1988, 216 pp, Rs. 150.

## CONFLICT Right to Property and Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution

Victor Z. Narively



Reviewed By Neera Swaroop

**A**midst the plethora of books written by the various accomplished writers on the Indian Constitution, Victor Z. Narively unhesitatingly comes out with his dauntless views on the "Conflict: Right to Property and the Directive Principles of the Indian Constitution," also the title of the book. An incredible piece of work, it is a gem for the gratification of the unquenchable quest for wealthy knowledge.

Especially useful to politicians, lawyers and law-makers the book is very much timely as it gives an insight into the framework of the Indian Constitution and its aspirations.

The citizens of India are guaranteed certain rights in the Part III of the Constitution. Any violation of these rights fundamental to the human existence is considered unconstitutional. And although all the powers are distributed among the Union and the States the Constitution forbids them from impeaching upon the fundamental rights of a citizen. If, by chance, a dispute arises due to any adverse effects of the laws on these rights, the Supreme Court is entrusted with the powers to intervene to resolve the issue, as a guarantor and protector of the rights of the citizens in the light of constitutional provisions.

One such fundamental right is the right to property. The Directive Principles encourage the State to become actively involved in the economic development of the country and the improvement of the standard of living, of its people, invariably clashing with the basic

right to property. Thereby, giving birth to a dispute.

The book gives a deep insight into this conflict and critically analysis the problem in order to clarify the issue involved in this basic conflict between the right to property as a fundamental right and the State policy contained especially in Article 39. Not only this, the book also evaluates the impact of this conflict on the decisions of the Supreme Court in the area of property rights.

Victor Z. Narively, presently a Professor at the Dharmaram Vidya Kshetram, Bangalore, has also been the Chief Editor of 'Deepika', a Malayalam daily for several years. In this book he argues that the Supreme Court, preoccupied with its role as a protector and guarantor of the fundamental rights failed to establish a balance of justice since it did not give due weightage to the Directive Principles of State policy. The enactment of 4th Amendment did not influence the Supreme Court's decisions. Like a tortoise it hid itself beneath the hard shell of the statutory interpretation inherited from the British and naively ignored the Amendment, thereby creating an atmosphere of confrontation between judiciary and Legislative, as the latter felt that the Court was interfering with its constitutional prerogatives.

In spite of the sporadic amendment of the property rights article—until with the 44th Amendment when the right ceased to be a right—the Parliament failed to adequately address itself to the deficient formulation of property

rights article in the Constitution.

The Amendments were in fact not amendments in the real sense as they hindered the process of building up healthy constitutional precedents.

The treatise comprises of five chapters covering all the possible facets of the problem in the historical and evolutionary perspective in the light of the Constitution of India. The first three chapters of the book trace the landmarks in constitutional development upto 1947. Focussing on the fundamental right to property prior to the 44th Amendment Act of 1978. With a detailed account of the Govt of India acts 1919 & 1935. Followed by elaborate discussions of the formal constitutional provisions and governmental structures, the Legislature, the Executive and the Judiciary, their powers and functions both at the Centre and the State levels.

The distinguishing feature, however, is the original, unbiased, scientific, and analytical approach of the author assisted by a close examination of the opinion of jurists and judicial pronouncements in a systematic and careful manner which makes thought-provoking reading.

## Police And Politicians Failed At Bidar

Continued from page 12

police.

Settle doubts about missing students. On the basis of the list of registered students from the College management, the State Government/District authorities must make an unequivocal statement about the number of students missing and/or dead so that speculation and misgiving on this issue comes to an end.

Appointment of the judge for the commission of enquiry which has been announced and fixing a period of three months for the commission to submit its report. The enquiry should not be allowed to be prolonged as has, so often, been the case in the past.

Settle the compensation claims for the property lost and damaged. According to the Deputy Commissioner, Bidar, the assessment has been completed and the administration has estimated the loss to be Rs 62 lakhs.

Postpone the Engineering College exams for a period of six months to enable the students to make up their lost work and regain

their confidence. The next terms study should be begun immediately after, so that the loss of time is minimised to six months.

Construct adequate hostel accommodation during this period so that no student is required to live outside the campus in rented premises. However, this should not result in the creation of a ghetto psychosis. In order to avoid such a situation free interaction between the citizens of Bidar and the student community would have to be encouraged which, in turn, would require the punishment of those involved in criminal acts.

Reconstitute and activate the local Peace Committees so as to provide greater representation to the genuinely secular elements in place of the existing group which has been set up in a mechanical and bureaucratic manner. Apart from political parties and legislators, socially conscious and motivated citizens could be associated with the efforts to restore the communal harmony which Bidar has known in the past.



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# CURSE



By Balraj Verma

Isn't it a rather strange phenomenon that if someone else expresses freely or mischievously something that is brewing in your mind or simmering in your heart, which you desist from declaring to others or confessing even to yourself, you are bewildered. And, instead of confessing, you start denying it groundlessly, that too in such vehement tones that not only the other person you yourself also become a prey to disquietude.

With a smile, as cunning as the man, Shankar Singh said, "I've noticed that this place has caught your fancy."

Joginder Pal really liked that place very much. But, instead of owning the fact, he shook his head in the negative: "No, brother. There is nothing like that." Then somewhat hesitatingly he added, "but of course it is quite a reasonable place and pretty cheap too. Isn't the sight of the sea, viewed from the roof, lovely? I also relish the cheese and brinjal pakoras they make there. As for coffee, every Madras can brew it perfectly well. But such pakoras are rare, if not altogether unprocurable. May be such snacks are prepared elsewhere also and perhaps better too, but at least I have no knowledge of it. I'm a stranger in this place. You people do not relieve me before it turns 5 in the evening. I feel tired. Even my tongue starts drying up. After having talked non-stop from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. my brain gets bogged up. After a hot bath and a little rest I stroll out of my room to sit here. The sight of the ship anchored in the port is a feast to the eyes. For a sojourn, Broadway is quite comfortable. But from there you can't enjoy the spectrum of the sea. Nor can you get there such dainty snacks. I like Captain's Cabin. The next eight to ten weeks will be well spent here."

Shankar Singh looked up and declared smilingly: "Here! Coffee for you. And Cabin's mistress too. She is far more delicious than coffee."

Joginder Pal did not like to be caught red-handed. But had to agree that the most interesting

thing for him in that coastal area was this lady.

Shankar Singh told him that the owner of Captain's Cabin was the widow of a sailor. For full five years she had gone around various ports, in the company of her husband. Obviously Captain Albert was an interesting chap. In front of Broadway, on the 7th storey of 'Indradhanush' they have their three-room flat in which she lives with her son Onasis. She is chary of words. But whenever some sailor, known long since, sojourns here she spends a few days in his company very hilariously. Except for these sailors she doesn't open out with other men folk. James, the manager of Captain's Cabin, used to sail along with her husband as Chief Stewart. He is a noble soul. Howsomuch rich or distinguished a customer may be, he would never offer to him, even by mistake, that seat on the western corner which is always reserved for Mrs Albert.

Pal said: "I have chanced to see her sipping coffee, once or twice but never seen her eating anything. She would just keep sitting, smoke away ten to twenty cigarettes and leave. The moment she comes upstairs James says, 'Good evening' very warmly. He places at her table a pack of King-Size Gold flake cigarettes and a ship brand match box and resumes his seat at the counter. I have never heard a word drop from her lips. Even to James's greetings she responds with not more than a faint smile. But James is satisfied as if this were enough for him. Even her cup of coffee he serves himself. Never sends it through any of the bearers. At times she sips a draught or two of coffee. Mostly she leaves it untouched."

"What a mysterious woman!" observed Shankar Singh smilingly; "Beautiful in the real sense of the word. Obviously she must have been a smasher in her early youth."

Referring to her dress, Pal pointed out, "Have you ever noted that she is dressed in black invariably. At times in black skirt and

blouse and others in black sari. For the last ten days I have been observing her in the dress of the same hue."

Shankar reacted: "Ch, yes. Even in this mourning dress she looks as enchanting as any grand model of Christian Dior."

As if soliloquising, Joginder Pal whispered: "Seated in her patent chair she keeps staring at the ships anchored in the port day after day. And this practice continues till advancing shadows of the evening bar her eyes from staring at these ships. I can understand the way she spends her evenings. But how does she pass her daytime?" Curiosity to know this increases with every day that dawned. But there is obviously no prospect of knowing that.

It was Sunday. In other words, a day of freedom from routine. As usual, the authorities of his firm had sent staff car for his outing and entertainment. He decided to spend that day at Marina Beach. He took a dozen sandwiches, a big pack of Kraft cheese and got his thermos filled with nice coffee and set out. All these arrangements were also made by the firm. During ten years of his career (consultancy) he had not come across such hospitable people and posh arrangements. "These Madras chaps themselves work hard and also know how to get ample work out of others," he mused.

The beach was transparent, clean and lovely. But it was almost deserted. Not many people were around. But for a few European men and women and coconut vendors no local face could be seen. He was surprised at the miserable lack of aesthetic sense shown by the people of this metropolis. Had such a beach been located in the north, it would have attracted massive crowds. He was musing thus when he saw a child of five or six coming towards him, with his hands outstretched as if for begging alms. The child was alone and was rushing towards him. Coming to Joginder Pal he clung to his legs and started shouting, "Uncle! Uncle!" He was a pretty roly poly boy. Pal took him into his arms and caressed him.

"What's your name, baby?"

"I'm not baby. I'm Oona. Babies are nasty. I'm fine. Am I not, Uncle?"

"You are very nice. But where is baby?"

"Babies sleep on. I never sleep during daytime. I'm good. Am I not, Uncle?"

"Yes. You are very good. But where's your papa?"

"Papa is a sea captain. He lives on the other side of the sea. He never comes to see us. He is nasty. I'm good, very good. I never go into the water."

"Oh dear! You are very good, Oonaji?"

"Not Oonaji, Onasus is the name mummy has given to me. Mom is very good. Look! That nude lady lying on the sand is my mom. You are good. Jimmy uncle too is good. But why don't you come to our house?"

"I shall. If your mom invites me, I shall certainly come."

"Jimmy uncle is afraid of mom. She sends me out with Jimmy uncle daily, but never invites him to our house. She never invites any one to our house. Everybody is afraid of mom. You know she has a pistol. It kills."

"Oona! Somebody called out from behind."

The child crying "Jimmy uncle! Jimmy uncle!" slipped out of Pal's arms and ran away. He noticed that the child was not familiar with Jimmy but also loved him.

"I knew he'll spoil your clothes, dirty child! This was Mrs Albert chiding the child, who was now happily lodged in James's arms. She was dressed in a bathing suit but had covered her body with a large house coat. God knows since when she had been standing there, with her sandals in her hands.

"Oona is a very pretty child."

"Onasus. His name is Onasus", corrected the lady.

It was the first occasion that Pal heard her speak. There was utmost tenderness, lilt and a strange authoritative dignity in her voice. Turning to James, she asked: "What about the car, brother?"

"They have promised to deliver it in the evening. If you are in a hurry, I can bring a taxi."

"I've a car. I can drop you at your place." These words slipped out from Pal's mouth almost automatically.

"Had you come only upto this point?"

"No, Ma'am. I had come for fresh sea air. No programme of visiting any place in particular. Just vagrancy. I just thought of going around the outskirts of the city."

"I'm a complete stranger here."

"If you don't mind, please drop us in the market." James and Ona sat on the front seat with the driver and both of them behind.

"Are you working for G.R.L.?"

"Yes. I'm their consultant. Our machinery is being installed in their factory. Six days in a week I'm engrossed in getting the machines fitted. On Sunday's they send staff car for my entertainment."

"You are staying in Hotel Broadway, aren't you?"

"Oh, yes. In room No. 8, on 7th storey. Just in front of your flat."

"So we know each other."

"Yes. To an extent."

"Oh!" She gave a broadsmile.

"Where do you dine? As far as I know the Oberois do not cater lunch and dinner. This is a strange pattern though."

"I like this arrangement. I don't take dinner. I take the supper I need at Captain's Cabin. Lunch I have in the factory. They serve quite a hearty meal."

"Yes, I know. G.R.L. are quite a good party." After a little pause she added: "Your eating habits are quite different. That is why you are maintaining your figure so well."

Pal said, with a smile: "I'm not so old, you know."

"Oh yes. A man of forty is at the prime of his life. May God protect you from the evil eye! You look even younger than I."

"You've guessed my age right. But you should be hardly twenty five or twenty six."

"You don't guess women's age. Nevertheless right today I've completed full twenty seven."

James looked behind and remarked: "Today is didi's birthday. On this occasion she moves about throughout the day. But this Goddam car had to go out out of order only today."

"Going about seated in a car? I don't call it roaming. It appears as though someone else is taking you around the pre-determined paths of his choice."

The driver stopped the car in front of the local coffee house of Indian Coffee Board. As the car stopped, James said: "Sonnie is asleep. Today he did a hell a lot of running around and shouting. He looks fagged out. If you permit, I may take him home."

"Do as you please, brother. But before that please treat us to a cup of coffee. In this dress you can't expect me to step out."

James and the driver went inside and brought coffee. The driver beseeched her: "Mem Sahib! if you don't mind driving yourself I may do an urgent piece of personal work. I shall reach the hotel in the evening."

It was obvious that he had made this request at the instance of James. Madam did not object. James stopped a moving taxi and taking Sonnie and the driver with him entered it and left, without making any further comments.

To be concluded



# It's Time To Travel

By O.P. Sharma

PHOTO: MEENAKSHI SWAROOP.

**T**ourism has high potency for generating greater economic activity, promoting national integration and fostering international understanding. Sustained efforts are on to ensure balanced development in India of the smokeless industry, tourism.

Beginning with merely 17,000 foreign tourists in 1951, foreign tourist arrivals in India for the first time crossed a magical one million mark in 1986. Against the target of seven per cent growth rate envisaged during the Seventh Plan, an average of 11.9 per cent annual growth rate has been achieved for the first three years of the Plan. This is total growth of about 40 per cent over the base year of 1984.

The domestic tourist traffic accounts for nearly 90 per cent. So during the Seventh Plan period one of the main thrust area identified is the promotion of domestic tourism and provision of basic facilities for middle class tourists. Due attention is now being paid to the segment of tourism which brings about national integration, heightens awareness of common interest and contributes to the general economy of the country. It is, therefore, imperative that appropriate facilities are provided for it.

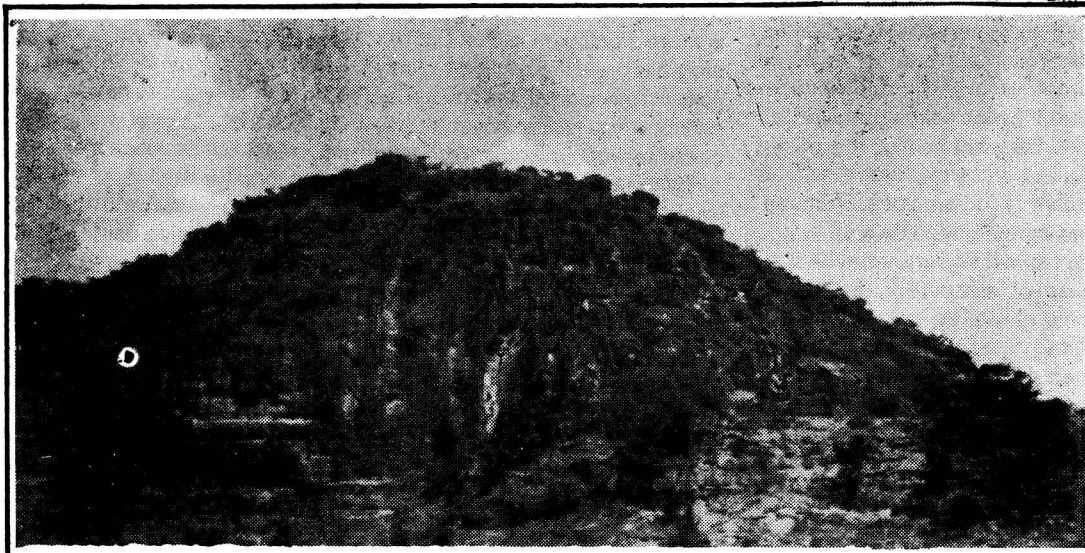
The Director-General, Tourism, Government of India, Mr B.K. Goswami has made it clear that attention was being paid to economy class tourists travelling on a limited budget. Besides the Union Government, the ITDC, all the State Governments and State Tourism Development Corporations are actively engaged in improving the facilities for middle class tourists. Private sector, too, has been involved in providing various amenities and facilities.

## Yatri Niwas

**F**or accommodation of middle class tourists Yatri Niwas have come up, one in each State, in the country. Yatrikas/Dharmshalas have also been constructed at a number of pilgrim centres. Besides, the Tourism Department has proposed to arrange package tours by different agencies for economy in tourism.

A number of other steps are being taken and facilities provided to promote tourism. In addition to sprucing up the tourist spots, pilgrim places, and wildlife sanctuaries, provision for convenient travel and comfortable stay are being made.

Road Transport service has been improved for different tourist destinations. Railways are expanded to possible extent and additional Holiday Specials are run to meet the peak tourist rush especially during summer season. Air links, too, render a supportive



service in meeting the need of limited time visitors. Wayside facilities are also being laid at selected places for the convenience of the travelling public.

## Budget Class

**S**everal schemes have been formulated to provide budget class accommodation. Recently, a chain of Yatri Niwas has been provided with 60-bedded accommodation as also Dormitories. This accommodation is functional without any frills. These are in progress at 26 places.

Clean, functional and medium priced accommodation is being provided in the form of Forest Lodges in important wildlife sanctuaries. At the National Park and wildlife sanctuaries, mini-buses or even elephants have been arranged. At pilgrim places the Tourism Department is putting up Yatrikas or Dharmshalas. Seven have already been completed at Amarkantak, Chitrakot (M.P.), Bidar (Karnataka), Nandmehar and Kampil (U.P.), Onkareshwar (M.P.) and Brindaban (U.P.) and few more are at advanced stage of construction at different places.

## Package Tours

**T**o suit the middle class tourists, a variety of package tours are being operated by India Tourism Development Corporation, State TDCs and State Governments. Recently, the ITDC in collaboration with the Arunachal Pradesh Government brought out an attractive package tour covering the State which evoked a good response. ITDC's package tours covering tourist centres in Manipur and in Sikkim have also been successful. Package tours are also offered to Kashmir and numerous other places. These are reasonably priced keeping in view the domestic market. Meghalaya, too, has offered some package tours. These tours are particularly attractive for groups of visitors and also employees availing of Leave Travel Concession.

There are considerable and extensive packages which are being offered for different segments like youth, students and the elderly. These are for a variety of tourist destinations catering to hill stations, beach tourist resorts and wildlife sanctuaries.

## New Circuits

**T**o cater to different choices, tourist circuits have been evolved which included Buddhist sector, beach destinations, historical and cultural centres and scenic spots. There are presently about 65 such circuits connecting nearly 450 tourist centres in all parts of the country. Recently

added circuits are Shekhawat (Rajasthan), Janshi-Orchha (U.P. & M.P.) and Chattisgarh (M.P.)

There is a conscious decision to promote domestic tourism in a major way and encourage inter-regional travel among all age groups and income brackets among all sections of Indians. A major campaign "Discover India, Discover yourself—In India you will see the World" was launched in the middle of 1985 to arouse an awareness of the diverse cultures and religions and also serve as a unifying force towards national integration.

Print media campaign was carried on in 1986-87 and the second phase campaign to promote lesser

known but more affordable destinations of tourist interest within reach of a group, a family or couple travelling on a limited budget. Such places are short-listed and include Ladakh, Mandu, Chilka Lake, Sunderbans, Andamans, Periyar, Sikkim, Valley of Flowers, Aihole, Nalanda, Shillong and Dwaraka.

## Specil Drive

**T**o further promote tourism, a special drive was mounted and this year the Jammu and Kashmir State had a bumper tourist season. A record number of tourists visited the Kashmir Valley.

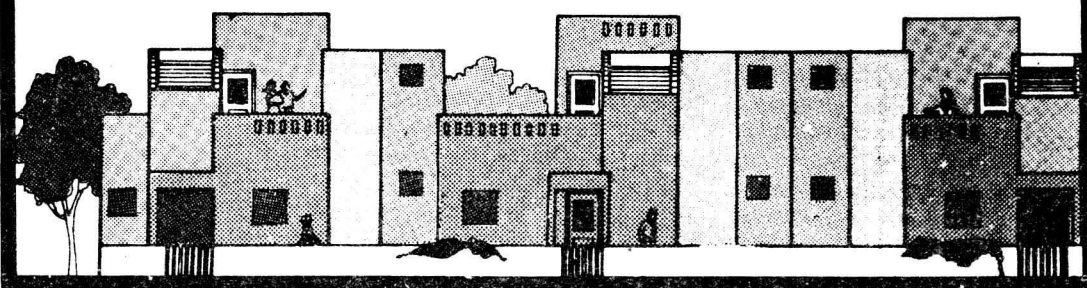
A special promotional campaign on "Winter Sports" in the State of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh had been launched to popularise the Winter Holidays and sports in Gulmarg, Pahalgam, Srinagar, Kurfi, Narkanda and Auli. Under the second phase of this campaign in April 1988, promotion of hill stations in the North East was also undertaken.

Tourism has emerged as the biggest foreign revenue earner with an estimated turnover of about Rs.1800 crore a year. Therefore, it is imperative that due attention be paid to attract foreign tourists-high budget and the middle class by offering appropriate facilities and interests.

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# Impressions Of Egypt

Ludwina A. Joseph

**T**he word Egypt evokes dream-like images—half-myth and half-legend—of crocodile, ram and falcon-headed gods, of splendid sphinxes, of elaborate death rituals and of the fabulous treasures of the tragic boy-king Tutankhamon. Egypt is all of that and more—it is rewarding to the historian, the archaeologist, the antiquarian as much as it is to the modernist. It manages to bridge the gap between old and new in a way that other cultures have not yet achieved. How smug we Indians are of our ancient civilization, often not recognising the superiority or even the existence of others. Egypt is a distillation of centuries of history piled epoch over epoch: Pharaonic, Persian, Greek, Roman, Byzantine, Turkish, and later French and English. History is so all-pervading in Egypt that it seems to overwhelm and envelop the visitor. Giza, Memphis, Saqqara, Luxor, Dendera, Esna, Edfu, Komombo—the names roll off one's tongue sonorously. It is the sheer antiquity and largeness of everything Pharaonic that impresses (the Pyramids are about five thousand years old). Greece and Rome pale in comparison—and difficult to admit—so does India before the magnificence of Karnak Temple, the massiveness of Abu Simbel and the exquisite detail of the murals in the mastabas at Saqqara.

In Egypt there is a danger of enjoying the glories of the Pha-

not done for secular India—given it a cohesion and a sense of unity.

"In India we are paying the price for democracy" said an Indian diplomat to me when I remarked about the lack of beggars in Cairo and the absence of the misery, squalor and wretchedness so prevalent in Indian cities. Perhaps it has something to do with living in an Islamic society—maybe it is a case of mandatory (by religion) alms-giving to the poor or the dread of the hereafter that makes men and women less violent and more law-abiding—but Cairo has far less crime than many world capitals. It has also plane-loads of rich Arabs coming in from the non-Mediterranean and less-ambient Gulf countries to throng the sin-spots: casinos, bars and night-clubs. But even the belly-dancing, although it varies in the display of vulgarity and explicitness, does not have the same sort of obscenity that one sees in the typical Bombay Hindi film with its compulsory cabaret sequence.

**E**gypt has achieved a degree of everything: modernity without losing its identity, religion without, as yet, too much extremism, individual freedom without a full-fledged democracy, a voice of authority in the NAM, a new-found confidence in international affairs, and is also slowly edging its way back from a long period of estrangement and isolation into the Arab fraternity and the League of Arab States—a community it

mood of the nation but also a fair warning that Egypt was going to wrest back its rightful place. What is more significant is that Egypt's progressive rehabilitation (only some of the radical Arab countries continue the trade boycott) has occurred without it being forced to renounce Camp David or the 1979 treaty with Israel, and this seems to indicate a moderate alignment emerging in Arab politics.

The attitude to Palestine and the Palestinians is more ambivalent even though Cairo still swears by the larger Palestinian cause. To Egypt and to the rest of the Arab world Palestine is a useful stick to beat the Israelis and the West with

but it is also something of an embarrassment, a festering sore that refuses to go away or be ignored—and now moreso with the "Intifadeh" (uprising) in the Occupied Territories capturing headlines and world attention. A pressman I spoke with was weary of the subject: Egypt had done its bit for Palestine—four wars with Israel was plenty to be going on with. Vague rumours have been in circulation that Egypt was preparing to sacrifice its peace treaty with Israel to serve the larger interests of the Arab world and the Arab League's collective defence pact. But however exaggerated anti-Israeli feeling may be since the Intifadeh, enlightened self-interest—which clearly decrees no further wars with Israel—is still uppermost. Unfortunately for his country President Mubarak's moderate peace plan found no takers—an adaption

of the Schultz plan it included the establishment of a Palestinian state in return for Israel's right to live in peace.

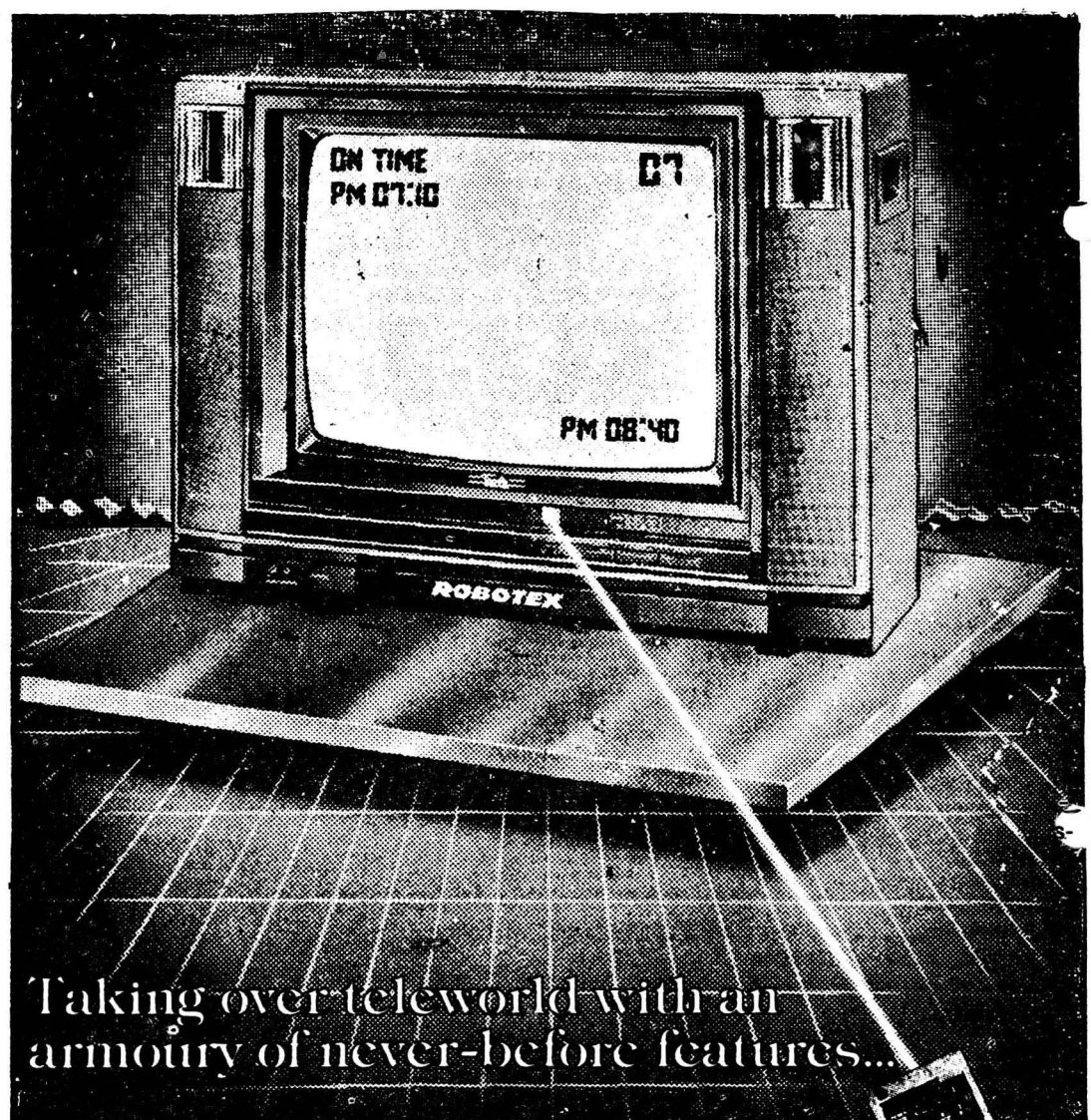
**T**o the average Indian, Egypt's pragmatism over relations with Israel is either shocking in the extreme or the subject of sneaking admiration since New Delhi has allowed fear of losing Arab goodwill to cloud the issue of a rationalisation of ties with Tel Aviv. Every now and then Indian supporters of a more independent West Asian policy insist that India not be manoeuvred or pressured by Arab sentiment.

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raonic past too much to bother about the present which is vibrant and vital if one has the time to discover it. In fact bridging the centuries is a moving force: Islam. In Egypt Islam is more than just faith, discipline or a way of life. It is all that and more. It is also very different in substance from its more fanatical counterpart in South Asia where we have such anomalies as the Muslim Women's Bill, the Ram Janmabhoomi-Babri Masjid dispute and are periodically engulfed in riots of the dimensions of the Meerut and Moradabad holocausts. Although Jewish and Christian (Coptic) influences have been marginalised in the presence of Islam, Egypt is still remarkably free of the creeping fundamentalism that is one of the less attractive developments in the Middle East. In fact Islam has done for Egypt what a mix of religions has

was so unceremoniously ousted from nearly ten years ago. The fuss made about Sadat's dramatic 1977 peace initiative when he visited Israel and addressed the Knesset and the consequent Camp David agreements—hailed as pathbreaking all over the western hemisphere but which enraged the Arabs—threw the Egyptians into a Coventry from which they have not as yet emerged. They did not quite make it to Algiers for the recent extraordinary summit on Palestine (mid-June 1988) but re-admittance appears inevitable even if dilatory. A furious editorial published at the time in the Egyptian Gazette about the slight to the Egyptian Ambassador in Algiers by "upstart Algeria" which failed to invite him as an observer to the League of Arab States summit, was a compelling eye-opener, not just of the



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